# AMONG ENGLISH INNS

BY

JOSEPHINE TOZIER

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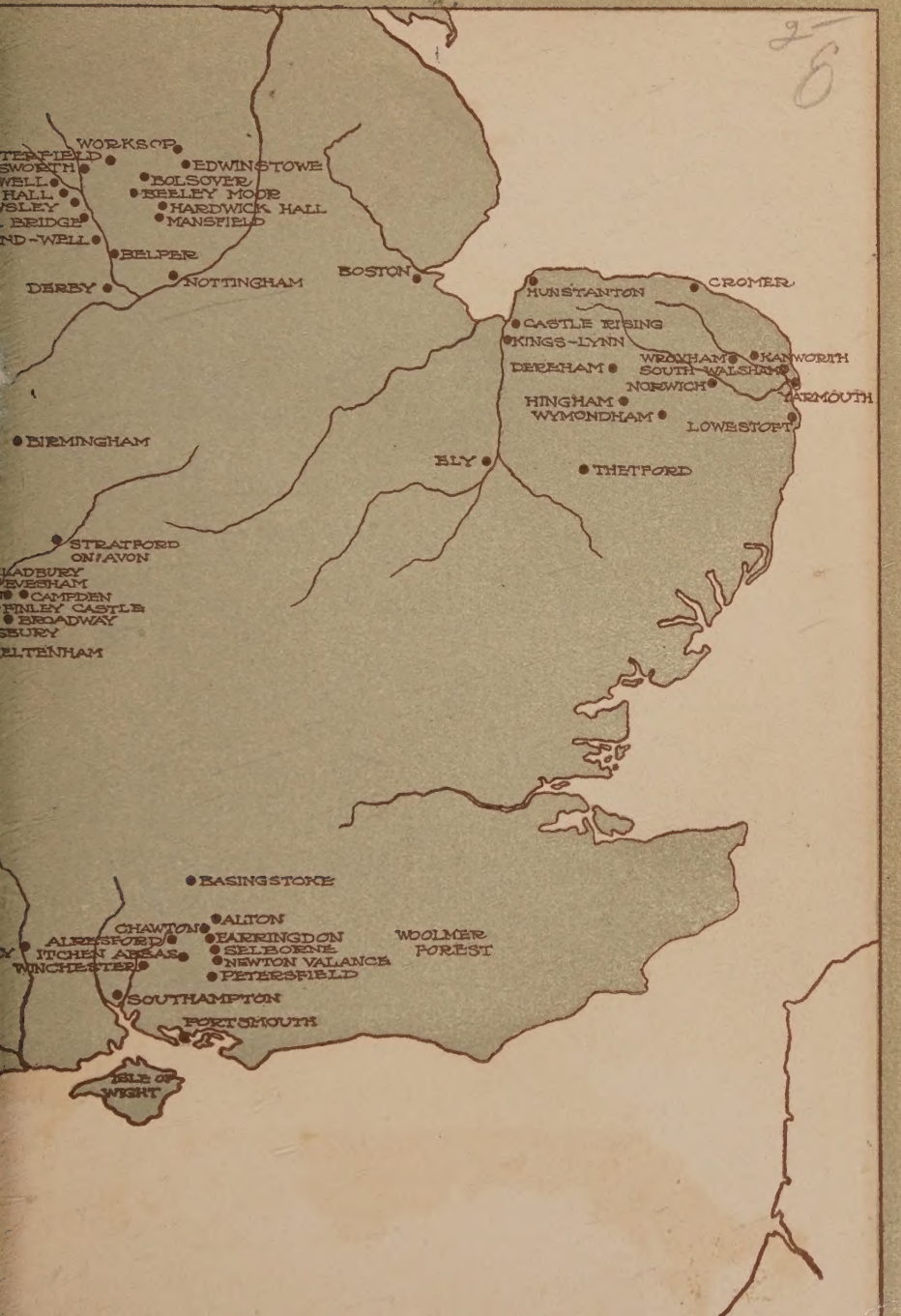
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THE THREE CROWNS, CHAGFORD

*From a sketch*

(*See page 37*)

*LITTLE PILGRIMAGES*

# Among English Inns

THE STORY OF A PILGRIMAGE TO CHARACTERISTIC SPOTS OF RURAL ENGLAND

BY

Josephine Tozier

ILLUSTRATED

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TO

THOSE FRIENDS

WHOSE CONSTANT ENCOURAGEMENT

AND SINCERE INTEREST IS RESPONSIBLE FOR

THIS LITTLE RECORD, MY

BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

# PREFACE

THIS little work was undertaken at the request, and for the use, of friends, who lamented that they had seen nothing of rural England, because they needed a guide to lead them to interesting places and characteristic spots. It has been the writer's endeavour to collect here facts about the country districts not mentioned in the ordinary guide-book.

This volume has been several years in the making, and during that period the writer has been several times carefully over the route she has selected principally for the combination of noted villages with others seldom visited by the average tourist, and distinguished for a variety of interest, historical and literary, and for diversity of prospect.

The tour can be made in a fortnight, or extended to a month or six weeks. It is planned for those who wish to travel in simple style.

Journeying in England is not cheap in the generally accepted term. The tariff at the

country inns for board and lodging ranges from twelve shillings ($3.00) to twenty-five ($5.00) shillings a day. It is always wise to secure rooms in advance, a very simple matter in a land where a telegram costs but a few pence. The inns are small, and consequently the accommodation is limited. Those who can afford a little extra luxury will do well to engage a private sitting-room. This gratification will not be found very expensive, and will add greatly to the enjoyment and comfort of the party.

The food at an English inn is very simple, and its want of variety meets with criticism from the average citizen of the United States, but what is offered the guest is clean, wholesome, and the best of its kind. The mutton is a revelation, and the flavour of the vegetables more delicate than those grown in American soil. A fixed price is usually charged for the meals, varying anywhere between two shillings and sixpence (about sixty cents) for a luncheon to a dinner at six shillings (a dollar and a half). The bread seldom meets with approval, and the coffee is a surprising and impossible beverage. Good coffee is very expensive, absurdly so, for it costs fifty cents a pound, and is only obtainable

in shops devoted to its sale in the larger towns. With the best will in the world, the landlady can neither buy coffee in her village, nor brew it so that it is fit to drink. Take tea if possible.

The manager at an inn, usually a woman, should be consulted about the best walks and drives. She knows the advantages of the immediate neighbourhood, all the most interesting sights, and the best vehicle to choose for excursions. She is always ready and pleased to give information, but she will never offer it unless asked. Frame your questions carefully; she can save you much loss of time and pleasure, but she has a very literal sense of comprehension.

The fees given the inn servants should be regulated by the stay and the amount of attention demanded of them. A shilling for those in constant attendance, and a sixpence for others less useful, will be taken with thanks. A charge for service is made in the bill for some unknown reason, but the servants always expect a fee, and no English guest ever fails to bestow it.

There is a system at railway stations by which, when the price of sixpence is paid on each piece, luggage can be delivered at your

abiding-place, or sent forward to the cloak-room at the station which is your ultimate destination. This is called "Luggage in Advance," but unfortunately the promise of the title is not invariably fulfilled.

It is safer to watch your luggage. See it put in the van when you start, note that particular van, and get into the carriage to which it is attached. This will facilitate matters. You will probably change cars on your journey. When that happens, the traveller must snatch a porter in all haste, find the luggage for him, and see it transferred. The fact that the trunks are labelled through to the end of the journey will not prevent them from being left on the platform of a junction, to follow at the sweet leisure of the officials, or to repose in that overcrowded institution, The Lost Property Office, until rescued by tracers of one kind or another. A porter expects a fee of from twopence to sixpence for carrying your trunk to a van. In this case the size of the trunk should determine the amount bestowed. More than sixpence will make him stare, and mark you for a stranger to British travelling methods.

Choose to buy third-class tickets, except when travelling at night or on a holiday. You

will find yourself perfectly comfortable, and in company more than respectable socially. First-class fare is nearly double in price, and on some of the English railways there are no second-class carriages. It looks knowing to use third-class.

The writer wishes to assure that she has not drawn on her imagination for a single one of the incidents set down in this book, although some of the minor occurrences have changed their locality at her will; the experiences are all facts, and happened as she relates them. She trusts, in presenting this book to future tourists in Rural England, that whatever lack of material comfort they may experience by following in her footsteps will be more than overlooked and recompensed by the diversity of the scenery, the charm of this garden-land, the quaintness of the hamlets, and the universal civility of the inhabitants.

THE AUTHOR.

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# *Among English Inns*

## CHAPTER I

### THE QUEEN'S ARMS

Selborne, Hampshire

THE steamer that goes between Havre and Southampton was just rounding the Isle of Wight, when three dejected-looking young women stepped out of a deck cabin into the clear air of the July morning. They had survived and endured with bitter complaints one of those noted passages of which the English Channel has the monopoly.

The waves had dashed furiously all night

long against the small ship; it had groaned and shivered in response, and these three women had groaned and shivered in concert with each creaking timber.

They had denied themselves the pleasure of longer wanderings in lovely France for the sake of a short tour through rural England. My persuasive tongue it was which had brought them to this decision and over the rough waters of the Channel. I had therefore not only suffered with seasickness myself through all the wild night, but had joined to physical pain the mental agonies of responsibility and remorse. The bright sun now above, smooth water around, and green land within sight dispelled regrets and reproaches; we met with smiling faces.

"Here comes Polly, as fresh and rosy as the morn," exclaimed the chief Invalid, as the youngest of our quartette appeared smiling at the gangway door. "She must get us some coffee."

"She can't," answered the blooming Polly. "There is neither tea nor coffee fit to drink on board. I have tried both. A jovial old Englishman suggested beer, but as I did not wish to spoil my record as a good sailor, I declined that morning beverage."

"Here are some tablets of chocolate, one for each."

I had forgotten in my despairing mood that I had wisely provided food for this very emergency.

"Must all these other poor seasick creatures travel to London without food?" sighed the sympathetic Invalid. The Southampton docks being now within sight, we lost interest in everything but the business of landing. We seized our bags and left the boat as rapidly as possible.

Pennies liberally distributed, and the simple formalities of the English Customs passed, we crossed the dockyard and turned down the street toward the Great South Western Hotel, and breakfast! Our normal appetites had returned with increased vigour after we felt firm ground beneath our feet. We were followed on our way by our small luggage, piled upon a hand-cart and drawn by a red-headed porter.

Breakfast soon waited our pleasure in the sunny dining-room. Toasted muffins, hot coffee, marmalade, and all the various accessories of that most comfortable English meal, while the proprietor of the hand-cart went away murmuring because, having demanded

three shillings, Polly gave him but half that amount, — quite enough for his service. Such encounters are sport for Polly. We have constituted her Treasurer and Financier-in-chief of the party. She proved so able in France, that we have voted unanimously to continue her in office on our present journey. To speak truly, she alone of the entire quartette does not consider arithmetic simply a matter of fingers.

The cheery breakfast so completely restored the entire party that the Invalid and the Matron began to make anxious inquiry about our immediate destination. "Just take us where you like, and surprise us," both the Invalid and the Matron had entreated when they constituted me guide of the party, and now two cups of coffee had excited them to indiscreet curiosity.

The Matron, be it told right here, is not so venerable as the name would imply. She is young, but owes her title to the possession of a husband. He is concealed somewhere in the mazes of the United States, engaged in the most fascinating sport of money-making, while she assumes, as a consequence of his existence, a dignity we spinsters do not presume to imitate. She also has an excuse to retire and

write letters to the absent gentleman whenever she feels bored in our society.

"You promised to ask no questions," says my lieutenant, the Treasurer. "The tickets are in my pocket, the luggage is labelled, and the train will be ready in half an hour to bear us away to Alton, where we are to take carriage for Selborne."

"Gilbert White's Selborne?" inquires the Invalid, in a whisper. Before any one bothers to answer, we are rolling away from Southampton, past Winchester, to Alton. The Treasurer puts us into third-class carriages; she insists that two cents a mile is quite all we can pay. The Invalid and the Matron felt at first inclined to rebel at the economy, but finding third-class so much better than they expected, they spend half the time of the journey talking about it.

One of the eccentricities of the British railway system is the aversion the officials display to calling out the name of a station. At the extreme end of each small platform, hidden among brilliant invitations to "Use Pear's Soap" or "Take Beecham's Pills," the name of the town is shyly concealed by a modest gray sign. My party almost refused

to follow me, when I began to pull down the bags at Alton.

"How do you know where we are?" asked the Matron.

There was no time to explain, so I bundled her on to the platform and quieted her fears by introducing her to the host of the Queen's Arms, who sat on the box of his wagonette waiting to drive us to Selborne. We had sent him a telegram from Winchester.

The town of Alton saves itself from hopeless dulness only by the pretty curve its High Street describes. I have read somewhere that Mrs. Gaskell was building a house in Alton when she died, yet the place itself possesses no visible attractions. A barrel-bodied, piebald horse, mounted on a rolling platform by four sticks of legs, and hanging in a most perilous and unnatural position outside a quaint shop, excited the Matron so profoundly that she vowed that Alton was a veritable picture-book town, but her imagination is broad.

Alton, situated in the centre of a hop-growing region, is a brewing town. The solemn brick Georgian houses look comfortable and ugly. Public houses, mere drinking-places, supply all the picturesque element by their

names: the French Horn, the Hop Poles, the Jug of Ale, and the pretentious Star, "patronized by Royalty."

The green once passed, and the homely little town behind us, we become aware of the charm which induced Mrs. Gaskell to choose Alton as a dwelling-place. The road branches where we leave the last houses; one way leads us over low hills to our destination, the other is a shaded road to Chawton, where lived Jane Austen's brother, who inherited the manor-house, and the cottage in which that gentle authoress spent the last years of her life.

Over the hills and far away goes the road to Selborne, past fields where festoons of the hop-vines make bowers of green. The highway winds up and down for five miles through copse and farm lands. We see noisy rooks gleaning the fields, and men ploughing with oxen; these last a rare sight in England. From the high points of the road we look down into the sunny valley on the little village of Chawton, and see the noonday smoke rising from the cottages. At the top of the last steep hill on our drive, the long, low ridge before us is pointed out to us as the "Hanger," and nestling at its base lies the village of Selborne.

None of the party, excepting the writer, has ever before seen an English village inn. They are at first inclined to be disappointed because "The Queen's Arms" does not more exactly resemble the comic opera counterfeit. When the bedrooms are assigned us, the Matron discovers we fill the house.

"A whole inn to ourselves! Could anything be more perfect!"

We reach our bedrooms and our long narrow sitting-room by an antiquated staircase, shut off with a door at the bottom from the neat old-fashioned bar. At the "Queen's Arms" the bar, true to its name, is a broad shelf of wood, lifted or put down at the will of the innkeeper's pretty daughter, when she serves cider, or more potent drinks, to thirsty customers. To be invited into the family parlour, behind the bar, is the privilege of only the chosen few.

Our private stairway is decorated with stuffed birds and porcelain tableware, all brilliant in colour but more or less dilapidated by age and use. Our sitting-room possesses as an object of luxury a grand piano, dating from the very earliest days of grand pianos. Like many ancient singers, both its voice and most of its teeth are gone, but, unlike a prima

THE QUEEN'S ARMS — ON GRACIOUS STREET. —
THE ENTRANCE TO THE VILLAGE

donna, its exterior has grown more beautiful with each passing decade. The old French mahogany case is a joy to the artistic eye. The mantel ornaments are frankly from Birmingham, and bear the stamp of the peddler's pack; all ugly and useless. The pictures evidently came from the same source many years ago. A hideous coloured landscape and an impossible Joan of Arc disfigure the quaint, venerable walls, but the lattice window opens wide on a scene so lovely that the interior of the room is forgotten.

Behind the diamond panes a gay flower-garden stretches away to broad fields, and past these are the dark beech-trees in the long, narrow valley of the Lythe.

Our travel-stimulated appetites do full justice when lunch appears. It consists of chops, new potatoes, and gooseberry tart, an excellent specimen of many of the same kind which we are destined to consume before our trip comes to an end.

"The sweet simplicity of English cooking probably had its origin when salt was highly taxed," observed Polly with solemnity, as she emptied the salt-cellar on her plate.

"We did not come here to criticize the food," interposed the Invalid, sternly. "Still,

salt is a healthy condiment; you might ring for some more." Polly has not left a single grain in the diminutive glass dish.

The village of Selborne has but a single street which is honoured with a name, Gracious Street. It is now little better than a deep, shady lane, which skirts the park of that comfortable small estate where, more than a century ago, lived Gilbert White, the naturalist, the genial writer of those graceful letters which delight the reader of "The Natural History of Selborne." In the time of Gilbert White, Gracious Street was the road through Chawton to Alton. It was then even more of a lane than it is to-day, and Selborne a nearly inaccessible hamlet.

The main village street, on which stands our inn, boasts no name, yet it is lovely to look upon. It is lined with thatched-roofed cottages in raised gardens that blush with roses and bright-faced flowers. Vines climb over the white-curtained casements, in which stand pots of gay blooming plants, and each cottage door is closed by a bar. This is done to keep the little toddlers we see peeping out curiously from tumbling among the carefully tended garden-beds. A bird-cage well out of the reach of the family cat hangs on nearly

THE MAIN STREET OF SELBORNE

every cottage wall, with finches chirruping gaily in their wicker prisons.

The ancient church dominates the entire village. The square, squat Norman tower is shaded by a huge yew-tree, reported to be a thousand years old; its dense foliage and wide-spreading branches almost hide the body of the church. Near the church is the vicarage. The old house in which Gilbert White was born has been replaced by a modern dwelling, but the lovely garden where he took his first steps among the flowers still thrives and flourishes under the watchful care of the present vicar, Mr. Kaye. The yew-hedge, planted over two hundred and fifty years ago, is now a superb wall of green, and beyond its impenetrable foliage lies the churchyard. In a nook made by an angle in the transept wall is the grave of Gilbert White. A worn stone, in which are roughly carved the letters "G. W.," marks his last resting-place. He was born in 1720; his grandfather was vicar of Selborne at that time. Here in the vicarage he was at home until he entered Oriel College at Oxford, and here he returned before taking up his residence at The Wakes and assuming the duties of curate at Faringdon. While the colonies in America were fighting the mother

country, and France her royalty, Gilbert White, in a village nearly cut off from the world by bad roads, was writing of the insect world to his friends. In 1776, he is more interested in a cat who has mothered a leveret than in the Declaration of Independence. In 1793, when royal heads are falling across the Channel, he writes chiefly of sand-martins and their young.

Since the death of Gilbert White there have been some additions to his home by later owners, but the new building has all been done in the spirit of the original dwelling. The comfortable modern drawing-room and the pleasant dining-room are in harmony with the old study used by the naturalist, now the favourite den of the present owner. Out of the drawing-room a passage through a well-filled conservatory leads to the lawns and beautiful gardens, but little changed since the days of the naturalist. The trees he planted are carefully preserved, and the sun-dial on which he noted the passage of the hours still stands on the lawn.

Looking over the churchyard stile, on the side of the Plestor (a playground for the village children), we see The Wakes on the other side of the sloping space. The long,

THE WAKES, FROM THE HANGER

rambling brick house, placed close upon the street, is shrouded to the very gables by trees and shrubs, which hide the windows from inquisitive eyes.

The early evening hours, in a country where the twilight lasts until nearly ten o'clock, are the most delightful times for walking. We climbed the Hanger after tea, with the comfortable feeling that dinner could wait until we came back. There is a steep path, called the Zigzag, said to have been cut by Gilbert White, but we chose to gain the hilltop by a long, sloping ascent winding up with an easy sweep under the beeches. At the top, from a bench placed there for the comfort of wayfarers, through a clearing in the wood, we looked down upon the sunny garden of The Wakes, and its windows hung with ivy. Behind the house the church lifted its tower, and still farther on the dusky trees of the Lythe twisted away like a monster green serpent to the misty hills of the horizon. On the right, smoke rising above the cottage roofs, buried in foliage, told of the preparations for the evening meal, while on the left, down the yellow road which winds along the steep hill toward Alton, came the ploughmen and their horses.

A sheep-common stretches all over the top of the Hanger, and a misleading path among the bracken and scrub-oaks goes to a most interesting little hamlet, Newton Valance.

"Who wants to see a haunted house?"

"Everybody."

I march boldly ahead, with my friends straggling behind. Fortunately for my reputation, the many lovely views they get of the valley absorb their attention and save me from utter disgrace. When I finally hail with glee an avenue of gloomy pine-trees, I have, unknown to my comrades, lost and found the way not less than five times.

The haunted house — so called — is built almost within the Newton Valance churchyard. The gloomy entrance, the neglected park, the empty glass-house, the forsaken aviary, and the huge dilapidated stone barns tell a dreary tale. The falling mansion is only to be described as a solid Elizabethan manor-house with a Greek villa tacked on to the front. Any more incongruous mixture of architecture it would be difficult to imagine. The country folk have invented weird tales on the strength of some bones found inside one of the plaster statues which embellish the Greek porch.

"They do say all sorts of things, but we ain't never seen no ghosts," the caretaker tells us. She lives in the only habitable part of the decayed mansion, which is the great kitchen, with a large family of children. Their laughter and games perhaps frighten ghosts away.

The original house was evidently built in Elizabethan days for lavish hospitality, but that was before the owner with shabby Greek taste appeared. Inside, in the ancient part, the rafters are rotting, while in the modern addition the gay French-mirrored doors are cracked and the walls covered with mould.

A long avenue, grass-grown and disused, goes straight down the other side of the Hanger, past two fallen lodges, and then through rusty gates, hanging each by a single hinge, out on to a pretty, cheerful road, along which Gilbert White lingered often to contemplate the wonders of his beloved mistress, Dame Nature. He was curate of the little village of Faringdon, through which this highway passes before it skirts the borders of Chawton Park.

The Chawton of to-day is much as it was in the time of the authoress who there wrote "Pride and Prejudice," as well as all her later novels. The square brick house in which Jane

Austen lived when her brother became lord of the manor is opposite the tiny inn, on a picturesque road of thatched cottages hiding behind verdure-grown garden walls, over which nod masses of tall, yellow flowers.

We were lucky in coming to Selborne in July. Then occur the most festive days of the summer, the flower-show, and the county policeman's dinner.

The flower-show is held in a large tent pitched on the lawn in the park of The Wakes. The many gardens which the villagers have carefully tended all through the year then give up their choicest specimens for this exhibition. The schoolchildren spend hours gathering wild flowers to compete for the prize given that little one who shall show the greatest variety arranged with the best taste.

The love which the English rustic has for flowers, and the skill shown in growing and arranging them, comes out fully at a village flower-show. The Invalid and the Matron were most enthusiastic when they saw the successful efforts of the children and the outcome of the gardens. They had formed their judgment of British taste by the dress of the women.

The prizes were plentiful and substantial.

JANE AUSTEN HOUSE, CHAWTON

They were distributed by the charming wife of the squire. The villagers looked pleased and happy, but the only noise and applause was furnished by the squire's pet bulldog, who accompanied the announcement of each prize-winner with loud barks and wild leaps of joy, to the intense disgust of the vicar's poodle, who sat by with the dignified bearing his station in life required.

There was music and dancing in the park, while just beyond the gates a shabby caravan from Petersfield, a near-by town, waited with its swings, carrousel, and shooting-gallery to swallow up the prize-money.

The squire's hospitality is responsible for the policeman's dinner. It is his entertainment. The constabulary is a valuable and imposing institution in rural England. During the hop-picking season Selborne and the country for miles around is overrun by rough men and women from the dregs of the London streets, who come to work in the hop-fields.

That muscular member of the county police who keeps the peace in Selborne has proved himself such a terror to the evil-doers among these hordes that the squire, with a desire to show his appreciation for the protection afforded his village by this athletic police-

man, once a year gives a dinner in his name to all the members of the constabulary for miles around. For many days before the great event the innkeeper's wife and daughter are busy all day roasting joints, baking cakes, and preparing dainties. Our meals are irregular; the Invalid murmurs; the Matron makes excuses; but we only get fed after a fashion until the great day arrives.

As early on that morning as is consistent with British habits (between ten and eleven) the guests drive into the yard of the inn. They bring their wives and children, their sisters and mothers. They come in busses, they come in wagonettes, in dog-carts, and every description of vehicle drawn by horses. In the coffee-room, in the parlour behind the bar, and in the tap-room tables are set. We were invited to go down and admire the flowers and the wealth of good things in which the British palate delights.

The County Constabulary is a very important institution, but the annual dinner of the County Constabulary is a much more important institution. We were greatly disappointed, being females all, and Americans as well, to find that the invited guests did not come in uniform. We finally decided that

it would never do to damage the immaculate smartness of the village policeman's official attire by risking its glory at games on the green. The men came therefore in those spick and span garments in which every Englishman manages to array himself on Sunday. The women were as dowdy as the men were trim, the children were cherubs, like all English children, and the horses groomed until they shone like satin.

The visitors drove into the yard with either a flourish of whips or of horns, as the style of vehicle demanded. The women and children were helped out, and went their various ways, to visit in the cottages, or to admire the gardens. Before the men even glanced into that most inviting tap-room, the fat, sleek horses were taken from the shafts, led away to shelter and comfort, and the carriage cushions turned over to save them from the sun. When these necessary duties had been performed according to the tidy ways of this most tidy people, mild sounds of mirth began to issue from the tap-room. It would not be consistent for the chosen representatives of the sternness of the British code to be other than mild.

The landlady and her daughters were busy showing the culinary triumphs in the coffee-

room to the women visitors. These gazed and admired, but dared not taste. The feast was not for them until their lords had eaten their fill. The inn is too small to accommodate all; the occasion being a policeman's dinner, the policemen ate first. After the women had looked and approved, the men marched slowly in to the banquet; we watched them from the window above. A period of perfect silence told loudly of the merits of the viands, but after a time the guests waxed merry. When the Squire came in to the dinner, he was greeted with song: "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow," which, nobody venturing to deny, was repeated countless times.

After the meal was over came games at The Wakes. We had fortunately received an invitation to be present. We sat on the lawn under the glorious old trees and watched the game of cricket, which we did not understand in the least; a tug of war pleased us better, — it came quite within our limits of comprehension.

The host of the occasion wandered about talking with old and young. We were exceedingly interested in the relations between the classes here displayed. It was a novel sight for republicans, — no equality, no con-

descension, yet not the slightest sign of servility.[1]

The policeman's feast is given before the stern duties of the late August hop-picking season demand their entire attention. When that strenuous time is past, Selborne sinks back into reposeful quiet. There are no market-days to disturb the peace, nor any unruly visitors. After the morning eruption of children on their way to school, the village street is given up to an old labourer with a full sack on his bent back, varied by an occasional carriage with showy livery, driven rapidly, and bearing ladies on their way to call upon neighbours probably five miles distant. To vary the scene comes the carrier's cart from Alton. It draws up in the inn yard, and, while the carrier lounges in the tap-room, his panting dog rests in the shadow under the cart.

"I have been to The Wakes and borrowed a male escort for our walks," said the Matron one morning. "Where is he?" demanded Polly. "Outside on the door-step," answered the Matron. "How rude to leave him there!" Polly exclaimed. "He refused to

[1] The estate of The Wakes has changed hands since the above was written. It is now owned by Mr. Andrew Pears, who will doubtless preserve all the traditions.

come in. I could not force him." "Then he is the rude one. How did you meet him?" "I was introduced to him yesterday, just after he had finished a peppery meal of wasps. He is a Scotchman with four legs, a tail twice as long as his body, and a passion for wasps. When I first saw him he was chained to his kennel, giving forth the most remarkable growls and yelps I ever heard. 'Them's Dirky's wasping growls,' said the coachman, to reassure me. 'You see, ma'am, he 'ave marmalade for 'is tea. The wasps come around and make 'im angry, but after 'ees eat five or six 'is tea tastes better.'" Dirky's tea consisted of bread and jam, which naturally attracted the voracious Hampshire wasps in great numbers, but, after Dirky had executed a war-dance, accompanied by the death-song, they left him in peace to devour his delectable dish.

We found Dirky a most amiable and willing guide. He trotted ahead and we followed to the church, where he exchanged amenities through the fence with the vicar's poodle, while we visited the Templars' Tombs. As soon as we came out, he resumed the lead, and away we went through an opening in the churchyard hedge. A slippery turf path took

us down, faster than we intended, to Barton Cottage, at the entrance to the Lythe. While we strolled across a quaint foot-bridge, Dirky took to the brook, and came out dripping before us on the path which skirts the valley under the beeches. The ancient road to the Priory led this way; we had just seen the church the Priors founded. The Priory was suppressed as long ago as when Magdalen College in Oxford was founded. William of Waynflete, Bishop of Winchester, dispersed the Selborne Priors for their unparalleled wickedness, and bestowed their lands on his new institution of learning. No sign now remains of the once rich Priory, its chapter-house, refectory, or dormitories, except the stones which are incorporated into the walls and cottages of the neighbourhood. Magdalen College holds the lands, and has the living of Selborne in its gift.

The Lythe path was a favourite ramble of Gilbert White. He mentions it constantly in his letters. It leads over stiles and through underbrush to the Priory Farm, a relic in name only of the former home of the gay monks who vanished with many other monasteries less deserving of the fate.

Along a rough bit of road, over low hills

and through corn-fields, on a beaten track so narrow that we are forced to go in single file, with Dirky wagging solemnly on ahead, we come again upon the village. From the height we stop to gaze enchanted at the perfect peace and quiet of the scene. The warlike Hampshire flies, who have pursued us throughout the entire walk with the tenacity of their kind, are the only blot on the landscape.

The bicycle is a great blessing to an English tourist. The popularity of these machines has not waned as it has in the United States. Motor-cars are plenty, but they are beyond the reach of travellers like our party; we are glad that we learned to ride wheels. The roads about Selborne are in fine condition. Through Wollmer Forest and past Lord Selborne's estate at Blackmoor is a long stretch with very few hills to mount. We rode in the long twilight through deep-cut lanes and through moorland purple with heather.

The sun does not give us here at its setting the brilliant fireworks with which it often favours us at home, but, when we sit in the smiling garden of the Queen's Arms after dinner, we are content to see the trees in the Lythe slowly change to every conceivable

THE CARRIER'S CART. — SELBORNE STREET — THE SQUIRE'S BULLDOG, "PETER." — "OUR PIGGIES"

shade of green with the fading light. At this hour, a long line of white geese, who spend their days in the paddock back of the garden, can be seen marching gravely home, in single file, in answer to a whistle from the farm where they belong. A dozen or more tiny black pigs, who are growing up in the same field, do their best to break up the military goose line with their gambols, to the intense delight of the innkeeper's tame magpie, who sits on the fence with his black head popping up among the sweet-pea blossoms and squawks.

We spent a good part of our last day in Selborne deciding how to proceed on our journey. Winchester lies on our route to Devonshire, and it is but twelve miles by road from Selborne to Winchester. We counted shillings, and finally concluded to take the first stage of our journey by carriage. Our bicycles had been returned to the man in Alton, from whom we hired them, but, even had we owned the wheels, the rumour of a mighty hill with three miles of continuous ascent would have prevented our using them on the road.

Many of our countrywomen would have disdained the simplicity of our inn, which

lacked all the luxuries to which most Americans are accustomed, but we left it with keen regret, glancing back until a fall of the road hid village and inn completely from our sight.

The way to Winchester leads over through pretty villages clustering along the banks of the river Itchen, which here, as a tiny stream, gives little promise of the huge mouth it opens in Southampton.

We stopped for tea at the uninteresting-looking town of Arlesford. The pilgrims in the Middle Ages, on their way to Canterbury, halted at old Arlesford. It is now fast asleep, except on market-days, but there is good hunting hereabouts, as the inn signs proclaim. "The Hare and Hounds," "The Horse and Groom," "The Fox" mean sporting patrons. These houses of entertainment date from stage-coach days. Their picturesque charms are quite ruined now by the ever-present brewer's advertisement which invariably disfigures the quaint architecture.

Itchen Abbas, a most delicious stretch of comfortable homes behind high hedges and smooth lawns and shaded by great trees, is our last halt before entering Winchester. We appropriately halt at "The Coach and Horses" to water the horses. Carriages, with smart

liveries, rolling to and from Winchester caused Polly to declare: "Here live the gentry!" She talks of "gentry" with the delight every one takes in a word seldom needed. While she is still turning it over on her tongue, we clatter through a fine carved gateway at the head of the High Street, and go down to "The George," where to welcome us the saint and his dragon are painted in glowing colours on the corner of the house.

The Matron casts a longing glance across the street at a black swan carved in high relief with a proud motto underneath and a gold crown upon his head. She thinks that an inn with such a fine sign must have very superior accommodations, but to The George we have been taken, so at The George we remain. This hostelry has existed as an inn for several centuries; now, very much restored and reconstructed, it has dropped the homelier name of inn for the grander title of hotel. The old courtyard into which the coaches drove has become a glass-covered palm-garden, and the coffee-room has its duplicate in every other cathedral town, yet there hangs about the house an old-fashioned air of comfort which is never found in the newer hotels.

The fluent writers of the Penny Guides

give full descriptions of the glories of Winchester Cathedral, and a guide-book, which costs sixpence, fairly overflows with information. We did not follow strictly these learned writers' advice. Polly refused to admire the graceful perpendicular architecture of the nave, and the Matron could not be torn away from the dream of knights and ladies, induced by the grandeur of the rude Norman transepts, while the Invalid lingered entranced before the delicate carvings of the rich mortuary chapels in the choir.

"If architecture is frozen music, each one of these is a sonata," she exclaims. One of the most lovely of these monuments a barbarian called "Pummel" has disfigured with his hideous name.

There is nothing more wonderful to my mind, among all the wonders of Winchester Cathedral, than the beautifully coloured effigies of bishops and prelates, which fortunately escaped the vandals of the iconoclastic days of the early Reformation. Cardinal Beaufort, a son of that very turbulent gentleman, John of Gaunt, lies here carved in marble, clad in magnificent red robes, looking prosperous and satisfied. He was rich, powerful, and generous, for it is said he gave four hundred thou-

sand pounds to improve the condition of the poor prisoners of his time.

The ancient kings of England are more interesting in Winchester than they are in history. Their remains, here gathered together in chests as dainty as jewel-caskets, are placed high above on the choir screen. Their names and the dates of their reigns were the plague of my school-days. When the wise verger who was guiding us about mentioned casually that one painted casket on the right contained, as remains of one of the many Ethels, four skulls and six thigh bones, and another on the left was filled with assorted biceps belonging to an Edward, no one was the least surprised. Our child's history taught us these kings were capable of an unlimited number of heads and countless minor members.

The patron saint of the cathedral, unlucky St. Swithin, lies low in the hospital for damaged carvings behind the high altar.

"Serves him right," observes the irreverent Polly, whose nerves are affected by the weather.

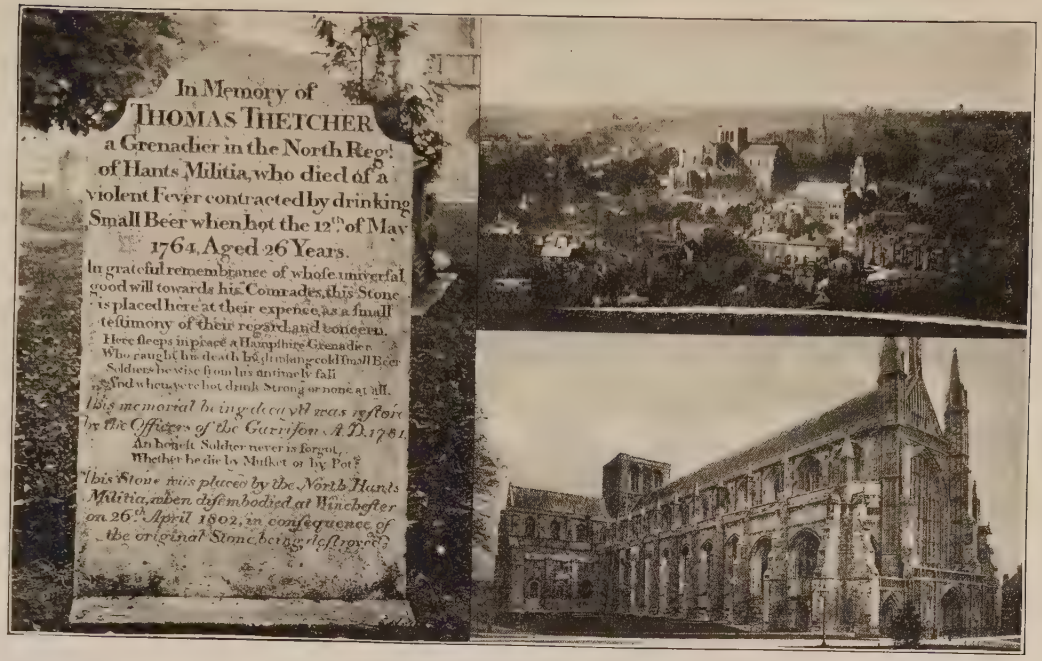
At the side of the great portal there hangs on the wall some exquisite grille work. These fragments were parts of the former gates used to keep the evil-smelling pilgrims out of the

choir. Through open ironwork they could witness the ceremonies, and yet not bring contagion to the monks. These gates are soon to be replaced for the sake of their artistic value; evil odours have now quite departed from this fresh island.

At the entrance to the cathedral, along with the prohibition which curbs a man's desire to marry his grandmother, hangs an urgent request that " all worshippers shall leave their dogs at home, lest their antics disturb the congregation."

A few steps in front of the grand portal is the tomb of Private Fletcher, a grenadier whose only claim to perpetuated memory is that he died from drinking small beer when overheated. What small beer may be none of this party has ever heard. It is evidently much more deadly than any other kind. His comrades and grenadiers of succeeding generations have deplored his fate in a lengthy inscription on his fine tombstone.

The turbulence of old times in Winchester, when the king sent messengers to defy the Church, the Pope sent cardinals to intimidate the king; when the bishops came here to quarrel with the nobles, and there was war among all parties, has given place to a placid old city


In Memory of
THOMAS THETCHER
a Grenadier in the North Regt
of Hants Militia, who died of a
violent Fever contracted by drinking
Small Beer when hot the 12th of May
1764, Aged 26 Years.
In grateful remembrance of whose universal
good will towards his Comrades, this Stone
is placed here at their expence, as a small
testimony of their regard and concern.
Here sleeps in peace a Hampshire Grenadier
Who caught his death by drinking cold Small Beer
Soldiers be wise from his untimely fall
And when you're hot drink Strong or none at all.
This memorial being decayed was restored
by the Officers of the Garrison A.D. 1781
An honest Soldier never is forgot,
Whether he die by Musket or by Pot.
This Stone was placed by the North Hants
Militia, when disembodied at Winchester
on 26th April 1802, in consequence of
the original Stone being destroyed

TOMBSTONE OF PRIVATE FLETCHER — GENERAL VIEW OF WINCHESTER. — WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL

in which all the excitement is supplied by the schoolboys of the Winchester College. How far the young gentlemen of the preparatory school, founded by William of Wykeham, respect their motto, "Manners maketh man," we had no chance to judge. The long vacation had deprived Winchester of even that source of gaiety.

Winchester College also has an ideal conception of the servant question. Above the entrance hangs "The Trusty Servant," not pretty to look at, but how valuable one may judge from the description:

"The Padlock shut, no secret he'll disclose;
Patient the Ass, his master's wrath to bear;
Swiftness in errant, the Stag's feet declare;
Loaded his Left Hand, apt to labour saith;
The dress, his neatness. Open Hand his faith;
Girt with his sword, his Shield upon his arm,
Himself and Master he'll protect from harm."

# CHAPTER II

## AT "THE THREE CROWNS"

Chagford, Devon

"DO you want to catch the train half an hour before the time?" inquired the facetious Invalid, as Polly and I started off in the morning to walk to the station instead of waiting for the hotel 'bus.

"We are on our way to ask a few questions. That always takes time," we answer with dignity.

Polly's theory, built on bitter experience, is that the American manner of asking questions is not invariably understood in England; therefore, after several mishaps, she says she has invented a better system. It consists of fixing her eyes on the face of her listener, asking what she wants to know carefully and concisely, putting her question in the or-

dinary manner, then backward, then from the middle word toward both ends, watching with care for any faint gleam of intelligence she may see displayed in the listener's eye. At Yeoford, where we are to leave the train for Chagford (our next halting-place), we wish to be very sure that a 'bus is ready and waiting to take us over the eleven miles of road connecting the railway with the town. A harrowing experience I endured one unfortunate evening, and which threatened to extend itself into an entire night at that small station of Yeoford, has made us doubly wary.

The English railroads being run on the principle that time is made for slaves, the booking agent we found closely imprisoned in his little cell. In spite of our imperative rappings, he never lifts his little window until nearly train-time. Then fifteen people are kept waiting to buy their tickets, while the obliging man (who, by the way, cannot answer until he consults the time-tables) pulls down his book, and, after careful search, tells us most civilly that we can surely depend on finding the Chagford coach waiting if we take the train now due here. He hands us out four "single thirds" through to Chagford, and then goes on calmly distributing

tickets to the patient crowd that has by this time increased to the number of twenty-five.

The train, of course, does *not* come in on time, nor does it hurry itself to leave until ten minutes *after* time.

We are serenely happy in the consciousness that, as this is *the* train the coach is ordered to meet, the coach will wait for this particular train, even if it is detained until midnight.

"So much for proper English law and order," says the Invalid.

The judicious use of a little silver coin secures the privacy of a third-class carriage quite to ourselves; we order two luncheon baskets to be handed in at Salisbury, and then proceed to be comfortable in a very civilized manner. The English luncheon basket is a consoler for many things less delightful about their much abused railways. The traveller orders lunch from the guard, the guard telegraphs ahead, and at the station designated in comes a boy with a flat basket, for which you give him three shillings and a couple of pennies as a tip. Inside the basket is a bottle of wine, or cider, or beer, as the case may be, half a cold chicken, some slices of ham, bread, butter, cheese, fresh crisp lettuce, all daintily

put together, with plates, a glass, and Japanese napkins.

The graceful spires of the Salisbury Cathedral point up into clear blue sky as we fly across Salisbury plain, so long the dread of the early travellers, who went by coach between Salisbury and Exeter by reason of the interesting but somewhat interfering highwayman. Even a highway-*woman* is said to have succumbed to the romantic temptation of Salisbury plain, but she got hanged for her innocent fancy.

As we approach Exeter, higher land begins to show itself on either side of the line; and at St. David's, the second of the Exeter stations, comes the cry "All out! Change for Yeoford!" and a sweet satisfied smile breaks over my face.

"A journey without change of carriage is no proper English journey, especially on a through train," I tell my less experienced friends.

Yeoford is but a short distance beyond Exeter, and after the first anxious glance which discovers the 'bus ready waiting for us beside the platform, we climb to the seat behind the driver, as the only passengers, and

settle ourselves comfortably for the eleven miles of road before us.

When at the top of the first high ground we look back, the gray mists of Exmoor are are far behind us. We know it is Exmoor because we trust the driver implicitly for our geography, and it is he who points out to us the land of Lorna Doone showing dimly on the horizon. Countless miles of undulating meadow-land, flowing with honey and Devon cream at sixpence a pot, spread between us and that region of romance.

The ride to Chagford on the coach is not dashing; the horses have many hills to pull up, and the driver's tender care, combined with the heavy brake, prevents them from going down again too quickly. The setting sun has prepared such a gorgeous spectacle in our honour that we should have been satisfied that evening with even a slower pace. We came just within sight of Kes Tor, the west directly facing us, when behind the roundest hill in sight, the sun popped down looking like a huge orange globe; then every sort of colour and shade of red, blue, green, and purple, at once spread over the hills of the moorland in the background, while the fertile valleys

before us grew blue and misty as we gazed down into them.

We were almost at the end of the eleven miles, before the town showed itself lying in a wide basin among the hills, a little bunch of white houses, and a tall church tower giving back answering colours to the brilliant sky. Our last hill was very steep, and, as we clattered down into the narrow town street, we got a peep of the near-by furze-grown moor, making a rough park for an old manor-house.

The most fashionable hotel in Chagford is the Moor Park, but it had no room for us, so we went on up the mounting street and over the market-place, to "The Three Crowns," "a beautiful old mullioned perpendicular inn," so Charles Kingsley wrote of it.

Since I had last been here, a new landlord and a good scrubbing, although both somewhat modified the picturesque appearance of the interior, had worked wonders for the greater comfort of guests. The musty smell of centuries had fled before hot water and soap, new paper and fresh furniture.

Our party filled the entire house, as we did at "The Queen's Arms," though the Invalid got a bedroom to herself quite large enough

to hold us all had we lacked other accommodation.

The house was built by Sir John Whyddon, a worthy of the time of King Henry VIII. It was his town mansion. He was a gentleman of enterprising instincts; in fact, a self-made man. Born in Chagford, of a respectable family, but one hitherto totally without fame, Sir John's youthful ambitions took him to London, a most perilous journey when Henry VII. was still king. Young Whyddon studied law, rose to be judge of the King's Bench, became Sir John, and had the unspeakable honour of being the first judge who rode to Westminster on a horse; previous to that eventful occasion, mules had been considered quite good enough for dignitaries of the law.

The old house, with its iron-barred, deep-mullioned windows set in stone frames, its thick walls, and stone floors, has sheltered in its young days fine ladies and grim men-at-arms. On one of the stone benches still within the entrance porch, there sank down, shot to death for his loyalty to the Stuarts, Sir Sydney Godolphin, a gentle young Cornishman, more poet than soldier.

The thatched roof, green and brown with

THE THREE CROWNS, CHAGFORD

creeping moss, hangs thick above the rough gray stones of the walls; while here and there about the windows cling pink clusters of climbing roses. The Three Crowns has been used as an inn for over a century. The old innkeeper who preceded the present host, was noted far and near throughout Devon in his early days for the excellence of his entertainment. Sorrow over the unhappy marriage of a favourite son drove him and his excellent wife to habits fatal to their business, and when that unfortunate party with which I was detained at Yeoford came to The Three Crowns, the care of the visitors was entirely in the hands of a little serving-maid, whose endeavours to please were recorded in the guest-book. Her admirers showed their honest appreciation by touching poems filled with such substantial similes as:

"Lizzie's like a mutton chop,
Sometimes cold, and sometimes hot,"

or again:

"Good Lizzie had a little lamb,
And so had we,
She served us well,
And so we were as happy as could be,"

a reflection, I fear, upon the lack of variety Lizzie's larder displayed.

Pretty Lizzie now has gone to delight London with her service, the poor old hostess has died of excesses, and the old innkeeper, so many years host of The Three Crowns, has been succeeded by the new young landlord, whose bright little wife has tidied up the ancient inn. It now boasts a bathroom, electric lights in the sitting-room, and owns neither stuffed birds nor battered porcelain cups as decoration.

The Matron remarked that the portrait of his Majesty, the king, we have in our sitting-room "looks like a bird," but that observation, we consider, is slangy and disrespectful.

Sir John built his mansion near the church, facing the churchyard and shaded by the tall elms which grow along the wall. The windows look across the graveyard and a sunny valley to the low outlying hills of Fingle Gorge. The great hall of the old mansion is now changed to a schoolroom, where the little children of Chagford chant their lessons in chorus, a system of education still fostered with care in conservative England; we also hear them singing unaccompanied hymns with that blissful disregard of time so common to

their age. With these efforts the attempt at their education appears to end.

That Chagford is doing its best for the future of England and the colonies is evident from the long lines of sturdy boys who lounge along the churchyard wall, and the motherly little girls who care for large families of babies under the shade of the tall trees.

Whatever superstition moorland folk may have, and the writers tell us they revel in the supernatural, the fear of ghosts certainly does not trouble this village on the edge of Dartmoor. At night, after the children have deserted the burial-place for their beds, the churchyard becomes the trysting-place of lovers, and the lounging spot for the youth of the village, who sit on the wall, and make night hideous with patriotic, sentimental war-songs. The old men use it as a gathering-place, where they gossip with their gaffers, and long after midnight footsteps of solitary individuals can be heard strolling leisurely through a short cut made between the lines of graves. "Early to bed and early to rise" is a maxim which has evidently not yet reached Chagford.

The town streets all radiate from the market-place. There is a quaint octagonal building which the brave Chagford yeomanry

use as an armory, but where the market-cross was erected in earlier times. The low houses are packed close upon the narrow streets, and, being built of stone from the moors, are as solid as small fortresses. Their clay covering is whitewashed, yellow-washed, or pink-washed, according to the fancy of the owner, and there are moss-grown thatched roofs side by side with those whose old tiles are coloured and tinted softly by the dampness. That superlatively ugly structure, the modern brick villa, has crept into the line, alas! and disfigures quaint Chagford as it does so many of the old English towns.

Chagford needs a Carnegie. Its public library has as custodian a youth who divides his attention between the books and gardening, giving most of his time to the latter more congenial occupation. He neither knows the names of the books on the shelves, nor has he a catalogue to help the reader. After we had paid a shilling to become reading-room members for a week, he turned us loose among the scanty bookcases, and we made the startling discovery that Phillpotts is without honour in the town he has made famous in literature, and that even the prolific Baring Gould is

A STREET IN CHAGFORD

represented here but by one dilapidated old volume.

The road past the library leads off through shady lanes to the hill whereon Kes Tor sticks up like a monument, and it was to find this rocky beacon that we took our first walk, armed with a road map, price one shilling.

The road dips up and down, goes over narrow streams, past pretty hamlets, and busy mills. The Tor smiled on us so invitingly from different points of vantage that we tried various short cuts to reach it, with appropriately disastrous results. The old rock instantly hid itself as soon as we left the highroad, and never showed again until we came meekly back, to be tempted and fooled another time. After many failures, we were finally set right by a jolly, rosy, smiling, healthy gamekeeper (minus teeth), who told us a way marked "private," which, in our endeavour to be British and law-abiding, we had studiously avoided, and which was not *private* at all, but, in fact, the only possible way to reach our longed-for Tor.

"The way is but a bit beyond. Over the high moor."

So we go a bit, and still several more bits, then suddenly we remember that the English

idea of "bits" is vague. When at last we came out on the high moor the wind was so strong it nearly took us off our feet, and the Tor was still very far away, according to American ideas of remoteness. The bracken and the furze grew thick there about prehistoric remains, lying scattered all around us.

A long avenue of stones standing on end, like tombstones sunk deep into the ground, led us straight to the ruins of funny little round huts, roofless and demolished, yet sufficiently defined to show that they once were dwellings for men. Into one of these we crept to rest and be safe from the wind, and then discovered that in these apparently tiny huts there is quite room enough for a reasonably sized family.

"As deceptive as a foundation," said the Matron, who once built a house.

The view from these heights is superb. On all sides can be seen the low swelling hills of the silent moor, one rising behind the other, as though they went on in a never-ending perspective. At our feet lay the houses and the church of Chagford, so clear and distinct and near that we felt very much aggrieved at the long miles we had tramped. Beyond the village the low hills stretched away, and away,

and away, until they lost themselves in the sky of the horizon.

The hills on the moorland are all smooth and spherical. There are no trees to break the line. Only here and there does a tor stick up from the velvet surface like a stack of chimneys, and the carpet of soft green colour is sometimes broken by the roads which look on the hillsides like great crawling, yellow serpents. The whole landscape resembles a sea whose huge waves have been arrested by magic just as they were swelling to break. Somewhere in the distance are hidden those wild valleys where range the "Hound of the Baskervilles," and Mr. Conan Doyle's imagination, but nothing from our points of vantage suggested savage wastes.

When we left our hut for the shelter of the Tor to protect ourselves under its shelf from the fierce wind, we found one of our choicest illusions gone. The Tor, which looks so impressive from a distance, is but a rocky excrescence on close examination.

The heather was beginning to show its lovely pinkish-purple flowers on the side of rough Scorhill, along which we strolled toward home through clover-fields until we reached the road. Leigh Bridge, so praised

in the guide-books, was on our path, and we stopped to lean over the rough stone parapet and gaze at banks hung with purple rhododendrons, where the North Teign leaps and pushes between mossy stones to join its brother, the South Teign. The rivers there celebrate their reunion by loud gurglings and bubblings and tumblings down a tiny waterfall. This meeting-place is in the thick woodland full of flowering moss, pink and white. The tall foxgloves carpet the ground, and by the roadside is a hedge where wild roses and honeysuckle climb over the shining holly to join the many wayside flowers, with the morning-glory vines running as messengers between them all. There are not many choicer forest scenes in the world than here at Leigh Bridge. Every tree is trimmed with ivy, and every fallen log covered with flowering moss, and more wild flowers than we ever saw together before.

Nearer Chagford stands Holy Street Mill, greatly in favour with painters. It is said no Academy Exhibition is ever without a copy of this bit of woodscape. To nature's decoration on the banks of the quick-flowing stream there is added a ruined mill and a delightful old Tudor farmhouse embowered in roses, red,

LEIGH BRIDGE, THE TEIGN, CHAGFORD

white, and yellow, built in a garden as full of cultivated flowers as the near-by woodland is rich in wilder blossoms.

Chagford has a street-cleaning department of one oldest inhabitant, who scrapes the street vigorously all day and late into the night.

Chagford has also an enterprising brass band which plays vigorously several evenings each week, and Chagford has electric lights, and a fine organist to play on its fine organ in its fine old Church of St. Michael. The organ is comparatively new, and there is still a tradition of the simpler days when the precentor marched up and down the aisle whistling the hymn-tune for the congregation to follow with their singing. The church is centuries old, and has curious carved bosses along the vaulting of the ceiling, commemorating long-forgotten lords of the manor. A huge iron key hangs near the monstrous lock on the heavy ancient door: heraldic emblems, a little the worse for dust, are still above the pews of the neighbouring gentry, and a quaint old tombstone within the chancel marks the grave of Sir John Whyddon's granddaughter. Her gentle charms and no less attractive virtues are set forth in the following epitaph:

READER WOULDST KNOW

"Reader wouldst know who here is laid
Behold a Matron yet a Maid
A Modest looke A pious Heart
A Mary for the better Part
But drie thine eies Why wilt thou weepe
Such damsells doe not die but Sleepe"

The Whyddon estate lies some five miles from Chagford, at Whyddon Park; and in St. Michael's Church lie buried many descendants of the noted old judge.

It means a long drive to see the moor properly. All the low hills within the boundaries of Chagford are outlying portions of Dartmoor, and on one of these, Nattadown Common, amid the furze and the bracken, we generally spent the evening, sitting at the base of an ancient cross erected nobody knows when, watching a gorgeous sky display after sundown.

It is only a mighty pedestrian who can see the moors by tramping over them. The most interesting part of this great romantic region does not begin until the town has been left several miles behind. We accordingly paid ten shillings, and in a comfortable wagonette, under the conduct of our landlord, who has

been a moor man[1] some years, we started out one afternoon to see what we could of Dartmoor between luncheon and dinner. A splendidly built road winds about out along the sides of the billowy hills. The few poor acres of farm-land scattered here and there around a lonely house beyond the town were soon passed; then we passed into the great silent region. Flocks of sheep cropping the sweet grass under the prickly furze, some herds of bullocks below in the swampy hollows, the wild little moor-ponies shaking their shaggy manes, and scampering off as we came near, were all the signs of life we saw on the lonely green stretches.

"There is Grimspound," said our coachman.

Grimspound is a prehistoric village. Our horse ready for a rest, we got out and pulled ourselves up a rough path. It is quite worth the trouble.

At least twenty-five of the queer little stone ruins are still traceable, and one has been restored by antiquarians, the top covered over with turf, the low entrance concealed by a semicircular wall, and restored to what those

[1] Meaning one who looked after the interest of the duchy in Dartmoor.

learned in such matters think was the burrow of the human animal. The village is surrounded by a rough stone wall, and the view from the great height gave the savage man not only a chance to see enemies miles away in that treeless country, but to keep watch over the wanderings of his flocks. After Grimspound, the road twists itself through a huge rabbit-warren, where millions of the little fellows flash their tails in and out of their habitations. A desolate house occupied by the warrener is here. In summer it is pleasant, but what must the winter be! We were told that Eden Phillpotts, the writer, had spent some months here. It may be that he was writing "The River" then. There is one other habitation, some miles beyond the warren, an exceedingly attractive house, closed and deserted.

"Too lonely for anybody but ghosts," ventured the Invalid.

"How do you suppose they ever got food here?" asked practical Polly.

"A few trees grow," said the Matron, "why not potatoes?" which made the driver smile. The trees in question were the scrubbiest of pines.

We drove past the haunts of the ancient tin

streamers, who made their living on the moor when England was a young country by searching the small rivers for metal. Here and there by the roadside we spied an ancient cross put up by the monks centuries ago, to guide them from parish to parish.

There are still some mines open in deep glens. "Not very profitable," our driver said. One, quite deserted, had the great wheel and ruined windlass, like ghosts of the past, sticking out of the ground on a hill all seamed and seared by the old workers. Near it still stands a villainous-looking tavern not in very good repute. From the site of the old mines we got a good view of the gloomy prison at Prince Town, looming up against the sky on top of a hill miles away. Brilliant green stretches of glittering bog-land lay below us, and our horse went down a long, long hill with cautious steps, to stop at a pretty little inn in a dale where there are actually full-grown trees. This is Post Bridge, and dignified by the name of a village, although we see nothing but the inn.

"The tea may not be good," said cautious Polly, "but it will be refreshing after our long drive."

From Post Bridge we returned home by

new roads, but we had already seen the chief characteristics of the moorland. Although different points of view reveal different aspects, the scenery is all more or less the same, and it is hard to imagine on this bright, smiling day that the cruel blind mist, which so often leads travellers astray, can ever settle down upon this open landscape, or that the blackness of night can, as so often happens, envelop these green hills at noontime. Dartmoor has moods, and, although the sadness of its face may be too vividly described by the guide-book authors, the impression of its lonely desolation is felt in the midst of bright sunshine.

The moor-sheep and the rough cattle graze here on the hills, and sturdy ponies range about at will, growing so wild that the poor little fellows cry like children when they are first put into harness. In our drive of several hours we saw only one man. He was a herder out looking after the roaming cattle over which the duchy is supposed to have some supervision. Each duchy tenant is allowed to keep on the moor as many sheep and cattle as he can shelter in his own barns during the winter; but human nature is weak, and not only does the rustic fail in honesty occasionally, but a

few of them have been known to go secretly out, gather their neighbours' branded sheep, and drive them quietly with their own to the nearest market, where they could sell them unnoticed, although by such dishonesty they become but a few miserable shillings richer.

Cranmere Pool has the reputation of being the very wildest spot to be seen in the whole extent of Dartmoor. The boldest members of our party longed to get there. So far, we had seen nothing in our exploration which to the transatlantic eye, accustomed to the scenery of our native land, looked as wild as the descriptions we had read with awe. Our landlord offered cheerfully to guide us to Cranmere, casually observing the while, "The way is very tiresome, and there ain't nothin' to see but a bog when you get there."

But he does not know, as we do, that a bogey lives at Cranmere Pool, and a very jolly bogey, too. In life he was the wicked Mayor of Okehampton, and, having had the misfortune to die when such punishments were in fashion, he was set about bailing out Cranmere Pool with a sieve. Having been a very, very wicked person in life, he was up to a trick or two after his death, so he searched about the moor until he found a dead sheep,

which he skinned, and with the hide he made his sieve water-proof and well tightened. He then proceeded to flood Okehampton. This game he found so entertaining that he refused his pardon, and has continued ever since, when he is not busy sleeping, to repeat the joke.

As Dartmoor covers one hundred thousand acres or more, we hardly had time to explore the whole. We saw enough to be convinced that there was a striking similarity about all the hills, all the bogs, and all the lonely rabbit-warrens within its limits. The Hampshire uplands sink into mole-hills before these great billowy heights, although, in reality, the highest point of Dartmoor is not more than twelve hundred odd feet above the sea-level.

It was the view of the heather just coming into bloom which started Polly and me off on the walk to Fingle Bridge, one of the most romantic spots about Chagford. The Matron and the Invalid went by carriage. They were immensely pleased with the charming drive, but they lost the ramble along the path beside the river and the intimacy we, who trudged, gained with this most theatrical little gorge. Brilliant pink carpeted hills on one side, fold into other hills opposite covered with green young oak-trees; the tiny river dashes along

FINGLE GORGE

in between, curving and twisting all the way. No hill in the entire gorge would be hard to climb, but the whole scenery is in such perfect proportion, river, trees, rocks, and hills on so small a scale, that the tiny ravine has a wild majesty not often found in nature. In places the heather-covered slopes came so close to the water that we were forced to clamber over the rough stones to find our path again; the trout shot in and out in the clear babbling water, but no fishing with a bent pin is allowed here. Fishing tickets must be got in Chagford. We lingered along the grassy banks, fascinated by the bristling little stream, until we reached the stepping-stones near the mill. Greatly to Polly's delight, I lost courage half-way over, and was afraid to spring over the rushing water until the continued quack of the mill ducks shamed me by their very evident ridicule.

England is no place for hurrying, and a sojourn in Chagford should be lengthened to three weeks, to fully enjoy all the pleasure the woods and the hills have here to offer. Although our plans allowed us but little time for lingering, we stole another day for the sake of visiting the Okehampton Saturday market-day.

A market-day is the weekly dissipation, the one exhilarating spot in the English farmer's summer life. The men come from far and near to transact their business, to talk crops and live stock, the women to gossip, and the dogs to exchange their opinions about driving sheep. Okehampton not only has a fine market, but the town lies in the shadow of a great Tor among the highest moorland hills. The ride thither on the 'bus, all the sights of Okehampton, and our dinner at the best inn cost but the sum of four shillings. Our economical treasurer therefore permitted this unforeseen expense. The distance is eleven miles, and along this road the view of the great plain of Devon, dotted with farms and marked out by broad fields, is so expansive that it seems almost boundless. The Invalid said she felt as if she were looking all over the world.

Along this highway are scattered little villages with tiny, gaudy gardens carefully protected by stone walls strong enough to hold back an army. The proximity of the stone-strewn moor and the difficulties of hewing the rock probably account for the huge stones used in building very low fences and tiny cottages. The walls alone are thicker than the

THE STEPPING-STONES

open space in the houses. There is a copper mine being worked on this road to Okehampton, but it looked neither rich nor prosperous to our eyes. It may be both.

We picked up market-goers at each hamlet and farm, and before we reached Okehampton the coach-top was buzzing with the soft sound of a Devon dialect almost incomprehensible to our American ears.

An English market-place shows the nearest approach to bustling activity to be found in the rural district. The pigs are scrubbed up, and the cattle groomed down for the occasion. They arrive in droves, in couples, or singly, at the eminently comfortable hour of ten in the morning. "Pigs at eleven" means that the auction sales begin then. The market auctioneer is a very important personage, often growing rich from his business. He calls off the bids in shillings in a way that drove poor Polly crazy. She always laboriously reduced them to pounds. "Sixty? Seventy-five shillings? Eighty? Ninety-five shillings?" rolled off with fluency, makes her wonder how much a fat porker knocked down at ninety shillings is really worth. An extra fat sheep, or an especially fine pig, is sometimes favoured with a ride behind its owner

in the dog-cart. These dog-carts roll in quickly from all sides, the vehicles being built all on one and precisely the same pattern, and the owner's rank or riches chiefly determined by the state of the carriage paint and varnish. The horses are all such well-groomed, well cared for beasts, that their condition gives small indication of their owner's estate. The farmer himself scrubs up like his animals, puts on breeches and gaiters, a cutaway coat, and, with his light waistcoat, white stock, and carefully brushed hat, he makes an appearance which would be no disgrace to a smart New York riding-school master. In this attire he is thoroughly at home. He bestrides his horse, or drives his cart, and even guides a wayward calf or a flock of fine sheep without any loss of dignity, "but he *does* look like a bluff stage squire," said Polly.

The shepherd's smock, so picturesque in olden times, has now given place to an ugly linen coat. This garment seems to impel a shepherd to hold up both arms and cry mildly: "Ho! Ho!" at intervals; the wearers of linen coats allow themselves to indulge in no more forcible vehemence. The calmness and the patience of the British country folk

never shows itself more agreeably than when they are driving live stock to market. Some tiny pigs, who infinitely preferred the seclusion of a shop to the market-pens, were pursued by men and boys without a sound. Gently they waved handkerchiefs in the unruly little piglets' faces, as if "Pigs at eleven" had never been the rule. A single farmer's boy in New England can make more noise driving home two cows at night than we heard all that day in Okehampton.

The White Hart Inn has a fine big balcony over the front porch, and on this we camped comfortably as in a private box to look down on the scene beneath. The bullocks ran about, more or less alarmed by their unwonted surroundings. Complaining calves were well protected by anxious cow-mothers, who charged boldly at all possible enemies. Silly sheep were kept out of the narrow doors by the watchful dogs, and the grunting, fat, black swine ambled comfortably along.

It is only after the serious business of the cattle auction is over that the real excitement on the High Street begins. Then the farmers and the squires gather in little groups, talking together, and emphasizing every statement by striking against their leather gaiters with a

riding-crop, in good old theatrical manner. The farmers' wives go shopping; John Ploughman lounges about, looking for employment, with his cords tied by strings below the knees, and his loose red handkerchief knotted about the neck. A few soldiers from the camp on the moor add a bright touch, with their red coats, to the sober crowd; the children run about everywhere quietly and happily, and the shepherd dogs have grand romps with their kind, reserving contemptuous growls for the town dogs.

Later in the day, after the serious business of dinner is over, horses to be sold arrive one at a time in the High Street, and show their paces. A good-looking lot they are, from the little moor-pony who has only just learned to obey a master to the great, lumbering farm-horse.

It is a lengthy proceeding, this horse-selling in an English town; the purchaser and all his friends look knowingly over every point of the animal. He is made to go up and down the street again and again. The small boy on his back rides him like a master; he shows off the horse's gait, the tender condition of his mouth. The beast has been groomed until he shines like satin, and his mane and tail are

either carefully waved, or tied up in fantastic style with straw. While this slow, careful sale was going on, and there was no fear of meeting stray herds of such wild animals as we had seen led meekly to market, we judged the time safe to see the sights.

Okehampton has a ruined castle hidden away in a park fit for the Sleeping Beauty. Here rhododendrons, roses, and all the former cultivation of the great garden have gone back again into wilderness, and have mingled with the superb, great ivy-grown trees which shade the tumbled-down walls. Here was a mighty castle. It clambered all over the hillside. A ghost still haunts the spot. Lady Howard, once the supremely wicked mistress, in a coach of bones, or bones herself, I have forgotten which, but anyway, something very dreadful to see, travels each night from Tavistock to pick a blade of grass; this task she must perform until all the grass at Okehampton is plucked. What she did to deserve this fate, except to be just wicked, no one in Okehampton seems to know, but she has been very badly talked about for the last couple of centuries, and she certainly has a hard task before her.

Under Yes Tor, the most noted of Dart-

moor's rocky piles, is a camp where all the great artillery practice goes on. The noise of the big guns booms over the entire moorland district, making certain parts of it rather dangerous for excursionists, but there are warning notices in plenty.

The ride home with a coach-load of soft-tongued Chagford folk was delightful. They made great jokes with the driver about the sober coach steeds, of whom he took the greatest care, never urging them at any time, and putting them down the hills slowly with the aid of a heavy brake. One lad on top jeered constantly at the slowest nag, named Dick, until he was laughingly advised by the driver to "take Dick and ride *he* home, for *him's* horses are no better than *they*," by which wise remark it would appear that the personal pronoun on a Chagford tongue gets hopelessly mixed. There are no confusing rules about the Devon English grammar, nor, in fact, are there in our own New Hampshire, where I once heard a farmer's boy roll off glibly "if I'd 'a' knowed that you'd 'a' came, I wouldn't 'a' went."

It was by way of Moreton Hampstead we decided to leave Chagford. It is only five miles to the railway station by this road, and

a coach makes the connection many times each day. As compared with the drive either to Yeoford or to Okehampton, the road is dull, although a Tor for sale was pointed out to us. The way to Exeter by the railroad from Moreton is delightful; the train runs around in and out among the cliffs on the very edge of the South Devon sea. On this journey, while making one of the usual changes at Newton Abbot, our most cherished object went astray, namely, a straw creation, in the shape of a bag, baptized by the Matron Jumbo. Jumbo, like an omnibus, is never full. Jumbo opens a capacious maw, and swallows all our trailers, from tooth-brushes to unanswered love-letters. He smiles broadly on all the left-overs, after the trunks have departed, and takes in every forgotten trifle. We all had part and parcel in Jumbo. He vanished on this trip.

We had arrived in Exeter before his loss was discovered. The colour and beauty of the green-topped red cliffs, the boats, the changing blue of the sea, and the flat, paintable banks of the river Exe, had so entirely absorbed our attention that no one noticed his loss. Jumbo was the Matron's own private property and pet; when she discovered that he

had disappeared, she promptly fell upon me with reproaches, and the assertion that it was to *my* care she had confided the precious charge while she went looking for a porter.

I had a certain indefinite sense of being guiltless, but I know myself to be careless and forgetful. Then, too, I stand in such wholesome awe of the Matron's wrath that I dared not contradict her statement. I fled to that haven of all British travellers, The Lost Property Office.

"A bag, a straw bag, left at Newton Abbot?" wrote down the chief clerk in that most important institution; "it will be forwarded to you at Bideford."

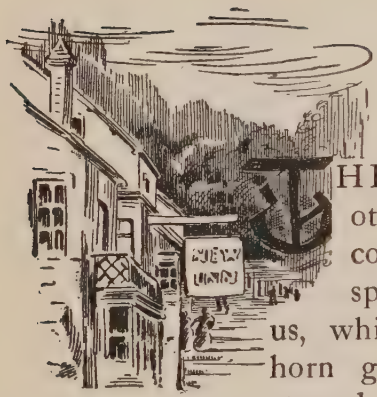
"But perhaps it's been stolen," hazarded the Matron, who had followed me.

"Oh, no, madam! It will be surely found," civilly concluded the official, but we were not quite so confident in human honesty. With their present surprising luggage system, the British railroads could not exist without The Lost Property Office. Our train stood ready, and we ran in answer to Polly's wild motions, jumped into a carriage we hoped was the right one, trusting to Providence in the absence of proper indications.

With a feeble toot-toot and many vigorous

puffs of steam, we passed over the bridge to St. David's, the square towers of Exeter Cathedral showing among a crowd of houses on the hill behind us, and went on through the high land till the railroad line dropped down slowly on to the low, sedgy land meadows, where bright-tinted headlands stood up along playful little inlet rivers running boldly into the land to make believe they were the great sea itself.

Bideford is built along one of these, named the Taw, and, when our train stopped, we speedily transferred ourselves to the uppermost seat of a high drag which was in readiness to take us to the New Inn at Clovelly.



# CHAPTER III

## CLOVELLY

THERE being no other passengers, the coachman smiled respectful approval at us, while he wound his horn gaily, and off we started over Bideford bridge on our way to Clovelly. Bideford town lies stretched along the estuary more asleep than awake. The busy days of Sir Francis Drake have long departed. A few small coasting-vessels ride by their cables on the great iron rings in the side of the stone quay, in place of the many galleons just home from the Spanish Main in these good old days. The quaint inns, where once browned sailors drank and boasted of their deeds, are still hoary and picturesque, unchanged outwardly since the departure of the former rollicking guests.

They now depend entirely on a few topers for their existence.

Bideford is built on a steep incline, so up we went, too, with vigorous horn-blowing by the guard, until the last fringe of cheap, ugly villas was left behind, and we were out on the broad highroad with ten miles of drive before us. Overhead arched a lovely sky, and to the sea tumbled thick-wooded cliffs. The waters of the bay were as full of shades and colours as an orchid leaf. The lazy swells rolled off to the horizon, where Lundy's Island, the former home of smugglers and outlaws, lay as innocent as a pink sea-shell, changing its colour and shape to a violet cloud, where the road curves, and offered us new views every moment.

The whole way to Clovelly is hallowed by the remembrance of Charles Kingsley and the hero of his great novel, "Westward Ho!" Indeed the home of Amyas Leigh lay in this direction from Bideford, and as we drove, so did he stalk along on foot to visit his friend Will Cary at Clovelly.

The roofs of many country residences show among the trees. Here and there a bit of the point of a gable, or a red roof just peeping above the green leaves. Sheep, so big and fat

that we think our eyes deceive us, are feeding in the rich green fields beyond high, luxuriant hedges. The road dips again and again down slight hills, and the tinted sea and deep-red cliffs are then shut off, only to appear again in new colours.

Finally, at a spot among tall, thick trees, we stop without warning, and the driver announces that our journey is at an end. There is no house or village; a barn at the top of the hill, a few seafaring men lounging about a mile-stone, and a steep woodland path leading apparently nowhere, is all we can see. The Invalid protests, but the rest of us, more obedient to the driver's command, climb down from our perch. We are then so much absorbed by the difficulties of the slipping and sliding descent that, before we have time to make any comment, by a sudden turn the green balconies, the funny little bay-windows, and jumble of toy houses buried among flowers and foliage, announce to us that we are in one of the most noted villages of England.

It hangs there at our feet, crowded in between high banks of dark green, zigzagging down the narrow bed of a former stream to the huge, liquid, opal sea. It has the prosaic name of Hartland Bay, but "it certainly is

A CLOVELLY STREET. — CLOVELLY FISHERMEN

like a jewel to-night," declares the Matron. "The clouds above us are models for poster artists, with their gay hues and dark, decided outlines."

If, in the picture before us, any variety was wanting, it was supplied by the red sails of the fishing-boats slowly rocking to and fro on the glassy water; or by the sturdy little donkeys who were picking their way from side to side down the broad cobble-paved steps of the street, bearing our bags and bundles before us to the door of the New Inn.

When we told our names to the hostess, the wisdom of sending a telegram several days before our advent was made manifest. Instead of being packed away in the large and ugly Annex, we had the original ancient miniature New Inn quite to ourselves.

"I feel as if I had got into my own doll-house," said Polly, as she mounted the low step into the bay-window, and, seating herself there, proceeded to fill its space entirely.

It is a doll's inn, but so perfectly proportioned that we had decided that, were it possible to nibble some of the wonderful Wonderland mushroom on the proper side, we should be in a palatial dwelling. We have none of

Alice's specific on hand, so we remain big and clumsy, and look with anxiety at the wealth of breakable objects with which our little sitting-room is encumbered. There are tables laden down with shepherdesses and cupids, more or less maimed; on the walls the china plates hang thick, and the mantel-shelf is littered with vases, great, small, and of middling size, while in every nook and corner, wherever there is a vacant spot, are flowered candlesticks.

There are four bedrooms in the little house, whose closed doors are defended from intruders by huge wooden latches, quite out of proportion to the possible danger of thieves. Low, long lattice casements, and a staircase that a tall man could go down with one step, we have also in our tiny inn. The Invalid's bedroom looks seaward, and into her window two bold roses peep; they climb up over the roof of the next house, and nod and bow against the pane, for in Clovelly the windows of the second story of the house, the next highest up on the street, get a clean view over the lower chimneys.

While looking at these clustering roses, we found the new moon gazing at us. The sky, the sea, the cliffs, and all the beauties of Clo-

LOOKING DOWN CLOVELLY STREET. — LOOKING UP CLOVELLY STREET

velly were doing their best to enchant our senses.

The perpendicular towns so common on many parts of the Continent, have no more picturesque qualities than this little hamlet. There are here the same unawaited flights of steps, unexpected back courts, blind alleys, and mysterious passages under arches and through houses; but there are here none of the malodorous horrors and dirt of the Continental villages. Clovelly may have had in Charles Kingsley's day an ancient and fish-like odour, for he mentions the smells in one of his letters to his wife, but to-day Clovelly is swept and garnished in every nook and corner, and the back gardens blossom and overflow with every kind of flower, painted gaudier by the soft sea air. The falling, twisting street is a riot of bloom from top to bottom. Tall fuchsias and great purple clematis fight with the roses for mastery to the very chimney-tops. The window-ledge boxes fling over trailing vines, and are gay with geranium and petunia, while pots of flowering plants adorn each one of the queer little porches, and the brilliant nasturtiums crowd each other to stare over the walls of the tiny gardens.

Every house is small in Clovelly but the

Annex to the New Inn, and that would not be called large in any other town. Although it has been lately built, the vines are doing their best to hide whatever there is ugly about it. All the other cottages well suit the little white wedge made by the village in the dark hillside. Down by the water's edge is a small pier, winding itself like a curved arm about the gaily painted fishing-boats which come to be sheltered there at night. There is a diminutive lighthouse at the point of this pier, and the sea-wall, raised along one side of it, is draped with the rich brown seaweed, an ornament furnished by nature that blends with the dark red nets of the fishermen.

The pier follows a natural formation of rock, which is probably the reason for the existence of a village in this strange precipitous glen. It is the very best place for lounging away the long, pleasant twilight; for gazing out around the tall neighbouring headlands on to the waters of Bristol Channel, and watching the lights come out slowly in the village hanging above.

Along the pebbly beach are a few houses looking like escaped Italian villas, their green balconies hanging over the water's edge.

There is down here a stout ruin of an early Roman tower, and the Red Lion Inn.

A part of this sober old hostelry was the birthplace of the sailor, Salvation Yeo, given immortal fame in the novel of "Westward Ho!" and always the home of his mother, whom Kingsley makes describe her wandering seaman of a son as:

"A tall man, and black, and sweareth awful in his talk, the Lord forgive him!"

Here along the side of the Red Lion the sturdy Clovelly sailormen lounge after their work is done, and it is probably on one of these benches that Charles Kingsley spent so many hours of his early youth, listening to yarns and learning sea-lore. Never was a better spot on earth devised in which to rear a poet and novelist! All the pleasure he enjoyed here during the long and lovely Clovelly twilights, Charles Kingsley has given back to the world in his writings.

There is another lookout above the beach, reached by crooked stairs from the harboûr. Here more of the sailors gossip the hours away, and here the Invalid and the Matron, the first evening of our arrival, secured the confidences of the most friendly among them. The acquaintance began with an ancient mari-

ner, who persisted in speaking of himself as a foreigner, although he had lived fifty years in Clovelly and was married to a Clovelly woman. He was Irish by birth, and it amused our American fancy very much to have him so persistent in claiming to be *foreign*. The Matron returned from this first evening's chat with a stirring tale about the first, last, and only horses ever seen on Clovelly Street. They appeared in the ancient Irish mariner's young days. An ignorant and reckless postboy attempted to drive a bridal couple to the door of the New Inn, with such disastrous results that the whole male population of the village was called upon to save the horses from destruction and to keep the chaise from rolling down into the sea. This they did by clinging to the wheels, and turning the horses sidewise on the broad steps of the street, at the peril of their lives. Fortunately the incident happened late in the afternoon, when the men had come back from the boats. Our Irishman was among the rescuing crew.

The landlord of Clovelly is Mr. Hamlin, who lives in Clovelly Court, close to the top of the village. The estate has descended to him through the marriage of one of his ancestors with the Cary family, which included

among its members the Will Cary of Kingsley's novel. Of Sir John Cary, founder of the family and a judge in the time of Henry VI., a gossipy chronicle says: "He was placed in a high and spacious orb, where he scattered about the rays of justice with great splendour."

This extraordinary power, however, did not prevent the good judge from being exiled during those troublous times. His confiscated estates were later returned to a son. At Clovelly Court lived Will Cary. Here within the park gates still stands the church where Charles Kingsley's father was vicar. In Clovelly park rises a wonderful high cliff, mounting three hundred feet above the pebbly beach and bearing the attractive name of Gallantry Bower. From among the park's trees we looked out upon the roofs of the village, that seemingly push one another down-hill like naughty children; then out beyond the jutting Hartland point we saw a dim line which they told us was the coast of Wales, and across the tops of the village houses there came into view the deep green wood that rises high on the opposite hillside. Along this way runs the Hobby drive, a fine, winding road built by the Hamlins, and for which every visitor

to Clovelly owes them hearty thanks. In the whole world there is no road affording more truly lovely views of land or sea.

The Matron says that she strongly suspects the artistic sails of Devon boats (they are of the same red colour as the Devon soil of the cliffs) originated in the times when many little casks of good French brandy rolled ashore under the shelter of Gallantry Bower, and found there proper gallants to receive the cargo. The sentimental Invalid is very unwilling to believe that this charming spot was ever used for other than romantic purposes, but unfortunately, both history and tradition whisper that all the riches of this coast were not caught with the herring.

The glory of the New Inn Annex is the dining-room; here the guest not only feasts upon fresh herring, sweet and tender, but his eyes are edified with much blue china and more hammered brass. I disdain to repeat Polly's insulting remarks about their artistic merits or her doubts of their antiquity. Our delighted eyes behold overhead the entwined flags of England and America frescoed on the ceiling with striking truth to nature, while under their gorgeous folds sit the Lion and the Eagle, smiling broadly down on the

guests. For those diners who choose to crane their necks between the courses, there is a poem painted on the ceiling with as many stanzas as the old-time ballad; I venture to quote only the beginning and the end of this inspired lay:

I.

"Let parents be parental,
Think of children night and day,
And the children be respectful,
To their parents far away.

IX.

"Our foes we need not fear them,
If hand in hand we go,
We want no wars with any man
As onward we do so.

X.

"But do our foes assail us,
We will do our best to gain,
With our children standing by us
Britannia rules the main."

Mine host of the New Inn, who beguiles his winter hours by dallying with the Muses, is responsible for this poetry.

In addition to its richly hung walls and

decorated ceiling, the dining-room has still another attraction in the person of the chief waitress, a young woman very efficient in her calling, blessed with a sweet voice, attentive, willing, and amiable.

Her fame has spread far and near as the Beauty of Clovelly. A mass of very blond hair, in strong contrast with her black eyebrows and eyelashes, appears to be the chief reason for which this title has been bestowed. Her features are by no means beautiful, nor is her complexion faultless. Polly says that at least her peculiar charms are useful as promoting conversation, for, after she has been seen, every visitor spends the leisure hours discussing how much of her hair is real, and whether its colour is artificial. One of the numerous old village gossips, whom the Matron has interviewed, says that the girl always had the same mass of wonderful hair even when she was a small child. Peroxide cannot be a convenient beautifier here in Clovelly, where the entire village supply of drugs would not fill a market-basket. The Beauty is a niece of the landlady, and does not seem at all disturbed, or even spoilt, by her peculiar celebrity, which is so wide that the summer

trippers gather in crowds about the inn to stare at her.

Against these same trippers the ire of the village gossips is fierce and fiery. From the coast towns they come by the boat-load to see the wedge-like village, and try to see it so thoroughly that not only do these strangers tramp into the back gardens and peer into the windows while the good cottagers are eating, but one old lady told the Invalid that she had once caught two busybodies just as they were about to look into her cooking-pots on the kitchen stove. We were not in Clovelly at the time of any of these invasions, but the numerous tea-room signs on many small houses bear testimony to how much refreshment must be sold here on such occasions.

Single blessedness is not the fashion in Clovelly. On the lookout bench at evening the village bachelor becomes the butt of all his comrades' chaff. At the time of our visit there was but one of these despised single creatures in Clovelly. This we inferred from the jokes thrown headlong at one man, who held his own boldly for a time, until at last, overcome by twitting sarcasms about his wealth and beauty, he fled ignominiously to his solitary fireside. We were inclined to

agree with the ancient mariner, who confidentially whispered to the Matron:

"That man'll be married inside six month."

Children are the only human beings who dare to run down Clovelly streets. They clatter along with so much noise against the cobble that the Matron insists that their English shoes are wooden. They begin to troop up and down before six o'clock, and rattle up and down until the school-bell calls the flock to lessons. The Matron is very fussy about being disturbed early in the morning. That others have shared her views, we find from the visitors' book, where a poetic genius has complained:

> "Although in Devon 'tis almost heaven,
> Down Clovelly streets is the sound of feet
> *Not* of angels, and *not bare*."

We had wandered up and down the steep streets in and out through every conceivable quaint passage, talked to all the friendly villagers, and admired the adorable flowers, when at last we gathered on the second evening in our sitting-room, among the broken-nosed shepherdesses and the cupids with

A HEART OF OAK. — CLOVELLY FOLIAGE

cracked hearts, to decide on our future plans. We had explored the neighbouring country to discover the old Roman road, gazed upon the ancient British earthworks, and revelled in the walk along the Hobby drive. Nothing was left undone which a proper tourist should do in this unique spot, except, perhaps, a sail to Lundy's Island. That is a perilous voyage for seasick women, and we willingly persuaded ourselves that Lundy's Island looked better from a distance. Had there been a drag going between Clovelly and Ilfracombe, the charm of the enchanting scenery would have decided us at once to take that route, but, as it sometimes happens, we were not fortunate enough to find a party going, and the expense of hiring such a conveyance was too great for our purses.

The way to Derbyshire is a longer journey than we cared to take without a break, therefore, after much discussion, Evesham was decided as a resting-place. That town lies in the land where the peaceful river Avon waters useful market-gardens, and orchards of plum-trees thrive under the lee of that pastoral range called the Cotswold Hills. A welcome telegram had announced the recovery of Jumbo, and the bag's safe arrival in

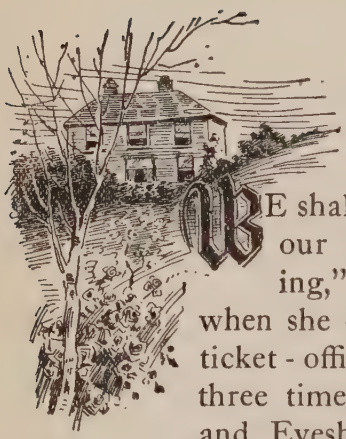
the cloak-room at Bideford station. We promptly hurried off another wire (Polly feels so English when she says "wire") to Evesham to announce our coming to the landlady of a sunny old farmhouse that looks down over a rose-garden upon the Avon valley and the town below.

We had decided not to try a real inn this time, but make an inn for ourselves. The Crown, the chief hotel in Evesham, is huddled down in the centre of the town, while at Clerk's Hill House pet garden thrushes would be bursting their little throats with song to give us a concert at dinner-time. As we bowled along on our return to Bideford, the accomplished coachman played for us merry and appropriate tunes. He drove his four horses easily with one hand, while with the horn he held in the other he wound out a continual strain of melody. The sea and cliffs along the road had lost the soft pastel shades we found there on the first late afternoon drive. They were now bold blue, red, and vivid green in the sharp morning light.

During the half-hour wait for the train, while the Matron clasped Jumbo to her side, and we had each taken a peep to see if all our valuables were still safe in his embrace,

we looked into the room at the Royal Hotel where Charles Kingsley wrote the greater portion of "Westward Ho!" The hotel is beside the station, and was the house described by Kingsley as that of Rose Saltern's father. In the drawing-room, where the author wrote part, if not all, of his noted novel, remains a fine Elizabethan stucco ceiling. It is decorated with garlands, birds, fruits, and flowers, coloured by artists who were brought from Italy by the merchant prince who lived in this house during the time of Sir Francis Drake.

# CHAPTER IV



## CLERK'S HILL FARM

Evesham

"WE shall not lack variety on our journey this morning," announced Polly, when she came back from the ticket-office. "We change three times between Bideford and Evesham, and unless we race after our luggage at each change, we shall surely share the fate of a young English friend, who once confidentially told me she never expected to see her trunk for three days after starting, if she had changes to make on her journey. If her luggage appeared some time during the week, she was satisfied. But we want ours to be in Evesham when we step out there on the platform."

"But if the trunks are labelled they will be all right," said the innocent Matron.

"And the Matron pretends she has travelled!" sighed Polly, holding up her hands.

Everything was labelled and put in the van, excepting, always, wide-mouthed Jumbo. The Invalid even wanted him banished. She says she refuses to acquire the European habit of stuffing the railroad carriage so full of personal belongings that she cannot be comfortable herself.

The platform at Exeter is a scene of wild confusion when we jump out to look after the luncheon-basket boy. One or two of these youths are in sight, their arms laden down with square baskets, none of which are evidently for us, as the boys pay not the slightest heed to our calls, but proceed to unload their wares on other wildly gesticulating passengers. Every woman, and several men, who passed our carriage, asked us if this train went to such unknown places that we became alarmed for our own safety. The only official in sight was pursued by a bunch of clamouring travellers, and Polly started to add one more to the throng, when we were partially convinced we were in the right carriage by an old lady. She assured us that she had asked seven porters and twenty-seven passengers if this train was for Templecombe, and, as they all

said "Yes," she thought we were safe to remain where we were. She further added to our confidence by joining us.

Polly then pursued a luncheon boy through a forest of weeping farewells, and captured two baskets intended for somebody else.

Considering the size of their country and the exceeding cheapness of telegraphic communication, the English are the most inconsolable of people when the cruel railway tears them apart. Half the platform of every provincial station is given over to groups of inhabitants who have come to speed a parting guest or relative who probably needs help with her luggage, though the friends usually come, not to help, but to weep. It is etiquette for the departing traveller to hang out of the carriage door, embracing each sorrowing friend at intervals, and then to wave a handkerchief as long as the station remains in sight. After these exhausting efforts, she usually sinks overcome on the cushions and falls to eating, no matter what the hour be.

So we, too, fell on our luncheon, because the Matron says that, "while eating delicious cold chicken, she may dream of the baked beans of her native buffet car." Polly and I joined forces at Templecombe in an exciting

race for porters. We nearly lost our lives by being run down by the platform baggage-trucks while trying to wade in and out of a pack of hounds (most unwilling travellers), who were being transported to some distant kennels along our line.

"I thought you never would get back alive," said the Invalid, who was hanging, in true English fashion, half out of a carriage window she and the Matron had secured, for they had watched our struggles with four small trunks and two big porters.

At last, after we had seen everything shut up in the van, and determined how near that particular van was to our carriage, we fell panting into the carriage, and the engine, with a feeble toot, drew us away into a fair country of meadow-lands, and past Bath the Famous, where the houses seem running down-hill to the Pump Gardens like the belles and beaux of King George's time.

From Bath our way branched up north, through Gloucester to Cheltenham, where again we changed. Luckily no homesick canines were here in the way, and a comfortable old grandfather of a porter quieted our nervous haste by telling us that the train for Evesham would not be along for half an hour.

After leaving Cheltenham, we saw the peaks of Great Malvern and the low, long ridges of the Cotswolds. Then appeared pretty little stations among flower-beds, great stretches of market-gardens, and soon we were in Evesham; so also was our luggage.

Our chosen stopping-place rather disappointed us at first. The High Street, which leads from the station, has evolved from a market-place and highway combined into a town thoroughfare. It is broad, it is commonplace, and lined with the conventional English brick houses, but the High Street luckily does not go on for ever, and when it twists itself down to the river between many ancient houses, and takes the new name of Bridge Street, the first sad impression of this beginning of Evesham is dissipated. Our way to the Crown Inn lies down this narrow way between the shops. Here we can hardly get the Invalid along, so intent is she on staring at the queer old lopsided Booth Hall, which occupies the centre of the open space at the beginning of the contracted street, and an antiquated old passageway that makes a splendid frame for the porch of All Saints' Church.

"It *is* an old town, after all, *isn't* it?" gracefully acknowledges the Invalid.

The courtyard of the Crown opens out of the street just where the hill is steepest. It is an inn blessed with possibilities which are completely lost, for want of a tidy mistress and a wide-awake master. The Crown is old and it is well built, and through the archway to the stable-yard we caught a fascinating glimpse of the Bell Tower rising above old monastery meadows.

"I wonder if this place is inhabited," said Polly.

We wandered into the open inn door and found our way to the coffee-room, where Polly jerked the bell violently for several moments without any response. At last, in reply to an extra violent long ring, a more or less untidy waiter appeared. She asked him if there was no message for us in such sharp tones that he started off on a trot, and soon brought back the anticipated note. Polly, upon reading it, found that we could not get our lodgings until the morrow, therefore should be obliged to put up at the inn. Off trotted the waiter again, to return with a pleasant little woman, who took us up the rickety stairs to palatial sleeping-rooms. My chamber proved to be fully twenty-five feet square, with a style of furniture and bed-hang-

ings that made me expect to see the ghost of an eighteenth-century belle before morning. The deep windows looked out on a blooming garden and down a grassy sweep to the river. All the musty smell of the old corridor and stairway was left where we found it; in the great room sweet air blew in from the garden. We got a very decent dinner after waiting for it, but then, waiting is good for the appetite. The table-cloth was not exactly spotless, but every one in the house proved so good-natured and careless that we had not the courage to complain. Our stay was to be but one night.

The Evesham brass band was blowing forth invitingly sweet strains in the Pleasure Gardens across the Avon, tempting us to take a twilight stroll down the steep street to the broad bridge at the foot. This bridge was built about fifty years ago by Henry Workman, Esq., to replace a narrow but much more picturesque structure. The same gentleman laid out the Pleasure Grounds, where the band was playing. They form a charming promenade along the river bank, and from the benches for loungers placed on the smooth lawns there is a fine view of Evesham's crowning glory, the Bell Tower. The Avon flows gently rippling past under the bridge,

and is broader here than at any other point near Evesham. Below the bridge the stream makes a sharp bend about the old Abbey meadows, while above it the sedge grass grows around an old mill, and little woody islands divide the water. On either side of the stream the hills rise, narrowing the valley.

The people in the Pleasure Grounds were still dancing on the turf to the music of the band as we turned homeward to our Georgian beds. This furniture made Polly happy, even if she could not get her bell answered. She declares she loves everything Georgian, even to the Georges themselves, and her extraordinary reason is that, if George the Third had not been what she calls "An obstinate fool!" (Polly is strong in her language), she would *only* have been able to enjoy England from a *colonial* standpoint.

It was early next morning when we started off toward our new lodgings on Clerk's Hill. Our landlady wrote that she would be ready to receive us at any time after eight, so we left the inn at half-past nine. It took fully half an hour to get our bill paid. Every one at the Crown seemed so busy doing nothing. When Polly, the treasurer, had disposed of this important business, she indignantly in-

formed us that the Crown was just as expensive as any other country hotel in England where they "gave us service."

"Too bad such a delightful old place isn't better managed," was the Invalid's farewell.

We wandered about looking at the sights in the town before crossing the river to the country. Clerk's Hill is in the country.

"Let us first go through that passage in the corner of the market-place behind the dissipated old Booth Hall," said the Matron.

"Dissipated?" said Polly. "The Booth Hall is only rheumatic, and you would be rheumatic, too, if you had been standing up for four hundred years."

The Matron took no notice whatever of Polly's exception, but went on with her opinions.

"These solid ancient English buildings all look to me," she said, "as though they had home-brewed beer for breakfast, and fed on roast beef every day in the week. The houses, the rustics, and the bulldogs of England look equally substantial and jolly."

We dived through the archway and came out into the churchyard, where, among the grass-grown graves, rise two graceful churches. Beyond, clear against the sky,

stands the elegant Bell Tower, the only remnant of the former great abbey. Its perfect proportions are made more graceful by lines of perpendicular ornamentation. The churchyard is so quiet, so shaded by the tall trees which grow about two houses of worship, that there could be no more ideal resting-place for weary souls. The sunshine throws the shadow of the Bell Tower across the graves, and the sweet bells hanging there play quaint, old-fashioned tunes to mark the hours. Two churches — one dedicated to St. Lawrence, the other to All Saints — were built by the monks of the old abbey; one was a chapel for pilgrims, the other for the use of the townfolks. For many years after the suppression of the monasteries, these churches stood bare, neglected, and left to decay, but they have now been carefully restored to much of their ancient beauty. The main aisles of the great abbey church, where the monks sang matins and kings prayed, are now gardens for the townspeople of Evesham, enclosed in the remnants of the church walls. Of the great tower, which rose into the sky twice the height of the Bell Tower, nothing now remains, not even foundations. The carved archway, which formerly led into the chapter-house,

is now an entrance to the town gardens. Evesham Abbey was immensely rich and powerful, but every stick and stone was carried off to build the houses, walls, and stables for miles around. The suppressed abbey was let out as a quarry for many years after the abbots were driven out of their possessions.

Not only did the abbots of Evesham own the tongue of land which the bending Avon takes in its embrace, where acres of the most fertile, abundant lands lie below the town, but all over the county extensive farms, and the tithe-barns, which are still standing in many places to tell the tale of enormous wealth. The vanished abbey saw many stirring scenes. As a sanctuary for many turbulent nobles, it was generously rewarded for the refuge it afforded. It existed from before the Norman Conquest until Richard Cromwell whispered in his master's willing ear that rich abbeys should be suppressed for practical reasons.

Our way from the churchyard led us out near the abbot's gate-house to the quaint little building, once the almonry, where the monks distributed their alms to the poor. There are many charming bits left within this tiny old structure, among others a thirteenth-century

fireplace, carved as monks could carve such things.

Boat Lane, down which we went on our way to our new lodging between market-gardens and plum orchards, shows traces of the old wall which the monks stretched across from the bend of the river on one side to the turn on the other, and thus cutting off a good-sized peninsula from the townfolk for their own use.

"What, ho! for the ferry!" sang the Matron.

"This costs a ha'penny," finished Polly, which is the fare over and back. A rope, worked by a very small boy, pulls the flatboat across the river to the pretty ferry-house. Here we went up the wooden steps to the shore, and then up a path through an orchard, and through a rose-garden to our farmhouse lodging on the steep hillside.

"Our luggage has come around by land, I suppose," said the Matron, as if we meantime had been travelling over the sea.

We voted for a week at Evesham. The Matron desired to see great parks, the Invalid demanded visits to ancient churches, Polly professed a weakness for quaint villages, and I love the thrushes and the grassy lanes.

Then, too, clothes *must* be washed sometimes, and these too rapid hotel laundry cleanings had left our garments in sorry condition. It was the prospect of a week's stay which had enticed us into lodgings where we could have peace and quiet, a nice little maid to serve us, and give Polly a chance to do marketing, a task she adores.

"I used to draw houses just like this on my slate," declared the Matron, when she first saw the simple square proportion of Clerk's Hill farmhouse, that would never tax the genius of the artistic small boy. It was unostentatious. Its colour was light yellow, but it had behind it the plumed elms of the green hillside, and in front a sloping wilderness of roses, red, white, yellow, and pink. Below the garden lay the grassy orchard, and still lower were the tall trees, which line the bank of the glistening river over which we were ferried. Floating up to our sitting-room windows came sounds of merriment from the boating parties, from the small boys fishing along the stream, and now and again the shrill whistle of the little toy steamboat, *The Lily,* on which it is possible to go several miles to Fladbury and return for the extravagant sum of sixpence. The passing of *The Lily,* we

CLERK'S HILL FARMHOUSE — THE BELL TOWER — BOAT LANE

found, threw the large family at the ferry-house into a fever of excitement several times a day. The rope which guides the ferry from shore to shore must be lowered, and *The Lily* leaves an oily trail; both of these features excited the indignation of the numerous small ferrymen and ferrywomen who work the boat.

Our farmhouse could not have been less than two centuries old, and it might have been even three. The charming lattice windows at the back and sides, of the most approved Tudor pattern, proved this fact. On the front, alas! they had been changed to the ugly modern sort the French call " guillotine windows." The view from our sitting-room and from my bedroom gave upon the broad plain to the Cotswold Hill beyond; nearer, the red houses of the town gathered about the Bell Tower, and the great clumps of feathery elms dotting the meadows, the low, dark bunches of green we knew to be plum-trees, made the landscape so ideally English that it was a constant delight. The smell of the heavy-laden rose-bushes, the concerts we got early and late from the generous song-birds who lived in the orchard, would have been quite enough to make a week in Evesham an enviable treat, without the charm of the many delightful

excursions possible in this district full of interest to the lover of nature and the antiquarian. Evesham lies within a network of good cycling roads, but Evesham also boasts a motor-car, and one, too, which is the property of a young gentleman who has made electricity his study. He knows every lovely view, every ruined abbey, every old English church, every fine park and charming old village within fifty miles, and he takes one to see them at a charge of six cents a mile. This expense divided between the four or five persons (a number the motor-car comfortably holds) was but a small outlay for the pleasure we got with such an enthusiastic conductor. There was no worrying about tired horses, no discussion as to the number of miles we might go.

The walks about Evesham are over paths leading among gardens and orchards, and these tramps gave us more delight than either motor-car or bicycle.

"I don't see why I can't walk as far as this at home," complained the Matron.

"Cooler air and better paths," decided Polly, and the Matron meekly said no more.

To Cropthorne, the first village which won our hearts, the walk was but a matter of three

miles. We took the morning for a stroll there, going nearly all the way through groves of plum-trees laden with fragrant fruit or fields of the running dwarf bean, showing gay scarlet or white blossoms. From the top of the ridge behind the farmhouse, a hillside where in the old days the monks had great vineyards, we went down the winding paths toward Breden Hill, a member of the Cotswolds, which is cut off from the family, and stretches verdant and shining before us on the left. The Cotswolds were behind us over the hilltop, and Breden Hill looked like a great, lazy, green animal with a nice, soft, round back as we walked toward it. The high hills of Malvern, too, stood in the distance behind the woody hollow where Cropthorne lies concealed. We turned on the road, leaving Breden on the left, and suddenly came upon the beautiful little village through a thick avenue of trees which led us to the Norman church, from which we looked down Cropthorne's hilly street. Thatched cottages built of white clay and black oak beams; low stone walls topped by hedges; gabled porches; lattice windows open to sun and air, with stiff crimson geraniums in pots on the ledges; plumy elm-trees, and a glimpse down the

street far over a woody country, — that is Cropthorne village. Inside its church are Norman pillars and arches, carved pews of the thirteenth century, and two fine monuments erected in memory of the Dineley family, who owned a manor-house not very distant. On the first of these the good knight and his lady lie recumbent with folded hands, while nineteen children, carved in high relief, kneel praying around the pedestal. The grandchildren, of which there are also several, are indicated by smaller figures carved above the heads of their kneeling parents. On the second monument, dating from a generation later, the knight and his lady kneel on a *prie-dieu,* and the family about the base of the monument is somewhat less numerous. In all of these carved effigies the costume of the period is most elaborately reproduced. The marble is even painted, the better to represent the dress, and the heraldic designs are coloured and profusely ornamented with gold. The long inscription full of historical and mighty names over the older tomb excited our curiosity, but it was so blurred that we could only distinguish a few of the titles of the noble relatives. The rich armour of the recumbent knight and the dress of his lady

CROPTHORNE COTTAGES. — INTERIOR OF CROPTHORNE CHURCH

was that of Queen Elizabeth's time,' while the second gentleman and his wife are clad in the sober garments of the Puritan régime. As we walked down Cropthorne Street on our homeward way, among the lovely and picturesque little cottages, we passed a line of easels, each with a painter behind it, perched up on the side off the road. The old half-timber houses and Breden Hill were being immortalized in a more or less artistic fashion.

Another morning we paid our sixpence, and puffed along the river in the little steamboat to Fladbury. The Avon winds on its way there between shady banks, takes sudden twists and turns past farm lands and old mills hidden among rushes. At Fladbury Weir it stops. We then left the little boat and walked back to Evesham by the road. Fladbury is quite a metropolis compared to Cropthorne. We had lunch there at a little inn called the Anchor, where an electric bulb hanging over the table called forth the information, given with great pride by the tidy maid, that " Fladbury was far ahead of Evesham in the way of lighting."

Fladbury is also on the railroad, which is not always the case with most of the pretty villages hereabouts. It is altogether a charm-

ing place with an individuality quite its own. A short cut across the fields took us out on the road in front of the estate of Fladbury's most distinguished neighbour, the Duc d'Orleans. We stepped over a stile in front of the half-French, half-English château he owns, just in time to interrupt some village scandal, which we would have given worlds to have heard through to the end. An old countryman in brown corduroy, leaning on his spade, was solemnly saying to an audience of one groom on horseback and a younger labourer:

"The old juke he come riding along the road, with Madam Somebodyruther — " Just then we appeared. The voice ceased, nor did it resume again until we were so far away that we heard borne upon the breeze, "Madam Somebodyruther," which was as near as we ever got to the rustic story concerning the French duke.

Wood Norton is the name of the famous exile's place. The lodge gates are decorated with the monogram of the royal Louis, — the entwined L of Fontainebleau and Versailles. The little lodge-house is decorated with fleurs-de-lys cut in the plaster. A fine royal crown is carved on the outside chimney, while in

strong contrast appear good solid English thatched cottages clustering near the gate.

The road back to Evesham, along which runs a broad, comfortable foot-path, skirts Green Hill, where Simon de Montfort fell in the decisive battle he waged against royal power in 1265, in the month of August, — the very month in which we were walking past the battle-ground. The great earl had spent the night at the abbey, having with him King Henry the Third, whom he held as a hostage. Simon meant to fight Prince Edward after he had joined the forces led by his son near Kenilworth, but the prince fell upon the young Simon de Montfort, and, after routing him, marched quickly to Evesham, forcing the earl, his father, into battle here on Green Hill. Simon de Montfort fell fighting desperately for the liberties of England.

In the manor-house grounds a column has been erected in memory of this stirring event. The great earl's body was cruelly mutilated by the royal followers, but the main fruits of his struggle, the desire of his soul, lives to-day in the British House of Commons.

Another day, across field and garden land, we took the shortest way to Elmley Castle, a gem of a village nestling at the foot of

Breden Hill. It still preserves the same character it had when Queen Elizabeth made the visit recorded by the wonderfully painted sign hanging in front of the village inn. Upon this she is represented, in her broad hoop and spreading farthingale, leading a procession of lords and ladies down the village street. The village is probably a little cleaner to-day, owing to more advanced theories, but the lords of Elmley Castle, who have held the estate since the time of Henry the Seventh, have frowned on the modern brick villa, and have kept this arcadian nest unspoiled through all these centuries. The church is one of the most ancient in the county, and the interior would be a delight to antiquarians, without the fine alabaster effigies, which excite profound admiration. In the churchyard is one of the most curious and quaintest of carved sun-dials.

A great castle stood somewhere here on the brow of the hill, but it was destroyed before the present mansion came into existence in the reign of Henry the Seventh. The village cottages were probably built about the same time, though some of them may be older, and the village cross itself dates back so far that nobody knows just when it was erected.

Two Academy pictures lately exhibited have had Elmley Castle as a background. "The Wandering Musicians," which was exhibited in 1899, has the village cross, and another picture, called "The Dead and the Living and a Life to Redeem," in which the figures are moving about the old sun-dial, was hung in the Academy this year. All around the base of Breden Hill are villages which deserve a visit; quaint, simple old places, with ancient churches, picturesque cottages, and a wealth of flowers. There is Pershore, with its great Early English church and stone bridge; Wick with its old-world houses; and Beckford with its wonderful box avenue.

The expedition to Elmley Castle ended our long walks. We did the rest of our exploring in the motor-car. Wickhampton, where Penelope Washington lies buried under a stone bearing a coat of arms of the stars and stripes, is quite within walking distance, but it is also on the way to Broadway. Turning aside from the highway we stopped at a little church and manor-house where had dwelt the young cousin of George Washington. Her mother had married in second nuptials into the Sandys family, and she came to live in the comfortable, homelike manor-house, which

with its dove-cote and moat, stands so near the dear little church where she sleeps her last sleep. The house is half-timbered black and white, in the style so popular in Queen Elizabeth's time. The great oak beams are warped here and there by age, but it is withal so bright, so sunny, with its cheerful garden and pleasant lawn, that you can only fancy happiness in such an abode.

Penelope Washington's grave in the church is inside the chancel rail, and is placed at the foot of two really splendid monuments erected to the memory of members of the Sandys family. The fine effigies have escaped all mutilation, the gilt paint on the canopies has defied the ravages of time, and the colours of the heraldic shields are as fresh as when they were first put on. The old church itself, with the narrow choir arch, the queer little pulpit, and old pews, looks just as it did when gentle Penelope came here with her mother to pray.

Broadway is five miles from Evesham, built on the side of the Cotswolds, and has more of the dignity of a very small town than the simple quality of a village. It is the resort of artists, writers, and musicians. Abbey lived here for some time, and the backgrounds

HOME OF PENELOPE WASHINGTON. — LAST REST-
ING-PLACE OF PENELOPE WASHINGTON

of some of his illustrations were plainly taken from sketches made in this village. Every one ought to trip around Broadway in flowered brocade and quilted petticoats. The houses are all Tudor, and there are but few gardens on the street. The Lygon Arms (the Broadway inn) is a small mansion. Mine host, the picture of a rosy country squire, showed us all over the charming old hostelry. Polly's incredulity as to the age of the inn as an inn almost caused disaster, and the Invalid's ire when Cromwell's bedroom was pointed out was a close second.

"What was Cromwell doing here? He should have been chasing kings," she broke out, though why Cromwell should not have rested himself for pleasure in this very comfortable big chamber, none of us except the Invalid knew, but she is intimate with historical characters, and the rest of us are just a trifle ignorant, so we never dispute her, for fear of being vanquished.

Mary Anderson lives in Broadway, and owns a charming house at the top of the village street, while at the other end, near the Green, lives Frank Millet, the painter.

"Broadway is beautiful, and Broadway is stately, and Broadway is aristocratic, but I

should prefer to paint Elmley Castle, and I shall *live* in Cropthorne," said Polly.

Broadway, with an accent on the *Broad,* has other attraction beside the Tudor houses, and, after we have had tea out of a broken-nosed teapot, which the Invalid sneeringly calls "a Cromwell relic," bread, butter, and jam, and paid a shilling and three pence each for the meal, we explored the village a bit, and then started off where roads shaded by fine trees led through undulating country to the beautifully kept park where Lord Elcho's house, Stanway Hall, stands behind a superb gateway, designed by Inigo Jones. Long avenues of trees and broad stretches of turf and woody hillsides are at Stanway Hall, and a little beyond is Toddington, once the estate of Lord Suddely, who proudly claimed descent from that Tracy who distinguished himself by making away with Thomas à Becket. One of the modern Lords of Suddely indulged in a fatal taste for speculation, with the result that the great park is now in the hands of a rich Newcastle collier.

Another pretty estate, Stanton, lies nearer Broadway. Polly dwelt in the land of her favourite gentry. The car ran past one estate after another, large and small parks and farm

lands, model villages, and the graceful arches which mark the ruins of another vanished abbey, — that of St. Mary Hailes. In this abbey, now slowly falling, was preserved the bones of Henry of Almayn, a nephew of King Henry the Third. He was slain in Italy by the sons of Simon de Montfort in revenge for the part his father took against the earl. According to the cheerful custom of the time, his heart was enshrined in the tomb of Edward the Confessor, his flesh was buried in Rome, and his bones at St. Mary Hailes, where the monks boasted of having the real blood of Christ. If any town ever grew up about this abbey, it has now completely disappeared. One solitary farmhouse remains near the ivy-draped arches of the former cloister.

We saw evidences of the rule of the abbots scattered all along our road in the huge tithe-barns or in ruined chapels, which antedate the Norman period, and were evidently established by the monks for the sake of the country people who lived too far from the abbey to attend the churches there.

One week proved far too short, however, to permit even a glimpse at all the treasures of Evesham's neighbourhood; the fates were

against us. As every one knows, it sometimes rains in England, and some of the rainiest days of our trip befell us in Evesham. The skies began to let down torrents in the night, and, when we came down to breakfast, there was a dreary drizzle falling on the big bushes of La France roses in front of our window. It rained down on the other roses as well, but somehow the gay pink bushes looked saddest on the wet mornings. Polly we found standing in front of the small grate looking as hopelessly disconsolate as the roses. A few sticks of wood standing upright and one or two lonesome lumps of coal were trying in vain to start into a glow.

"Why don't you send for the blower?" said the Matron, her housekeeper's instinct at once alert.

"Why? why? Because a blower is an unknown commodity in this house. The little maid has never heard of one."

"Did you try sign language?" asked the Invalid. "Perhaps blowers have perhaps other names here."

"Not only did I try sign language, but the little maid looked at me with the rapture of a discoverer when I held the newspaper up to cause a draught. She knows what *blower*

means. She says she has heard they had them down Birmingham way. The only help she could give me was to lie prone on the floor and make a human bellows of herself."

"It must be cheerful here on winter mornings to get up and start life with that sort of a fire," the Matron was beginning to say when our landlady came in with the coffee.

"English fires only ask to be let alone," she said, finishing the Matron's remarks. "They will burn by themselves without outside encouragement when they get ready."

This proved to be a fact. By the time we had eaten breakfast, with cold shivers running down our backs, the fire was beginning to show itself willing to warm us in a gentle English fashion. A rainy day is famous for correspondence. Those who had no letters to write did the family mending, and stared out the window between stitches. The roses went on blooming and the birds kept on singing, the far-away Cotswold changed colour every moment, going from dark green to light yellow, from brilliant sea-green to dark blue. A rainbow showed itself at intervals to deceive us, and the meadows and plum orchards had moments of hopeful brightness, but the downpour kept on in floods just the same.

Wet weather seldom troubles the English pleasure-seeker, we observed, and on Our Rainy Day the little river steamer went puffing along as usual. The ship's music (produced by the lone effort of one cornet) sounded vigorously in the damp atmosphere, and we even caught sight of an overgay passenger executing a jig quite alone on the small deck.

The clouds broke late in the afternoon to make way for a flaming sunset, and the new moon popped out of the sky, a polished silver crescent. The red town roofs became even redder, and a soft mist arose, marking the course of the Avon.

Polly and I got our feet into "galoshes" and started off to town. We found every shop closed, and we were leaving on the morrow without half the photographs we needed! It was Early Closing Day. Early Closing Day is the plague of the traveller in England. You never know when you are coming upon it.

Each town has its own day in the week on which it chooses to take an afternoon holiday. Promptly at two o'clock every shopkeeper locks his door fast, and, from the chemist down to the cobbler, the most vigorous knock-

ing will not induce him to open an inch for a customer. The shopkeeper and all his assistants then go off to enjoy the afternoon, each in his favourite way.

We wandered down Bridge Street, properly indignant, as becomes the American away from home, seeing the desired photographs behind the glass of the windows to exasperate us, while we shook the shop doors in vain.

"Why can't we console our sore hearts by going to the theatre to-night?" I said.

I had caught sight just then among the pictures of a brilliant yellow playbill, on which stood in large letters:

"EVESHAM THEATRE,
"MRS. SINCLAIR, PROPRIETRESS,
"SIR HENRY IRVING, PATRON."

followed by a most exciting list of plays.

I had many a time looked with longing eyes at the barn-like structure of combined corrugated iron and canvas, which stood by a strong picket fence opposite the Pleasure Grounds. This was the home of the drama in Evesham. We had no sooner revealed to one another the innermost desire of our souls awakened by the brilliant playbill than we started off in hot haste to secure tickets. Down

# VICTORIA THEATRE

## EVESHAM.

Proprietress . . . Mrs. M. C. SINCLAIR.
Patron . . . Sir HENRY IRVING.

## MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 22nd.

Reproduction of the New and Original Play, of intense local interest, written by the author of the "Campden Wonder," and entitled—

# EVESHAM IN A.D. 1730

Or, THE MYSTERY OF THE ABBEY RUINS.

(A Romance of other Days).

NEW LOCAL SCENERY, Painted by Frank Wallis. DRESSES OF THE PERIOD. MARVELLOUS EFFECTS. &c., &c

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Hugh Conway .. .. .. | Mr. Will. Sinclair | Miss Morley .. .. .. | Mr. A. E. Ward |
| Ormond (his half-brother) .. | Mr. D. J. Sinclair | Peter Smith .. .. .. | Mr. R. Baddeley |
| Roger Horsman .. .. | Mr. Alf. Miller | Simple Simon .. .. .. | Little Baby Wallis |
| Bob Comfort (The Wine Man from Tobertory) | Mr. H. C. Sinclair | Felicia .. .. .. | Miss Alice Sinclair |
| | | Miss Horsman .. .. | Miss P. Wallis |
| Hugh Rennie .. .. .. | Mr. F. Vaughn | Marie .. .. .. | Miss Marie Poole |

ACT 1.—DOWN THE AVON. An old-time Outing. The Hermit's Cave at Salford Priors. The Love that Kills.

ACT 2.—THE WEDDING EVE. An unwelcome Guest and an unexpected summons. THE ABBEY RUINS (by Moonlight). The Brothers. A game of Life and Death. THE DUEL AMONG THE TOMBS.

ACT 3.—THE WEDDING MORNING. The Missing Bridegroom. A Disappointed Party. The Search—Singular result. THE MYSTERY OF THE TOMB.

ACT 4.—AFTER TWELVE MONTHS. Change of circumstances. A ruined Father and an Obedient Daughter. The Breaking Heart. FELICIA'S DREAM, illustrated by a Series of MARVELLOUS LIFE-LIKE PICTURES (Invented, Taken and Worked by Mr. H. C. Sinclair).

N.B.—An effect never before worked on any stage. The Joy Bells and Happy Denouement.

## SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT !!

A New Grand Historical Play, by the Author of "The Campden Wonder," "Evesham in 1730," &c., &c., entitled—THE

# BATTLE OF EVESHAM

Or, THE LAST DAYS OF SIMON DE MONTFORT

Will be produced shortly.

N.B.—In Active Preparation, and will shortly be Produced—

**She Stoops to Conquer. Siberia**
**The Maid of the Mountain, &c., &c.**

PRICES OF ADMISSION.—Reserved Seats 1s. 6d., Boxes 1s., Stalls 9d., Pit 6d., Gallery 3d.; Half-price to First and Second Seats at Nine o'clock. Doors open at 7, commence at 7.30.

## ORCHESTRA.

Conductor (Violin) — — — — Mr. FRANK C. WALLIS.
Cornettist Mr. HERBERT GHENT. Pianist — Mr. JAMES GOODEY.
Second Violin Mr. BENSLEY GHENT. Violoncello — Mr. W. COTTER.

W. & E. SMITH Ltd., The Journal Press, Evesham

we went over the bridge, past the Pleasure Grounds, to where the "Victoria Theatre" hung out a sign like an inn. But the high picket fence protecting the playhouse had apparently no gate. Our anticipated evening pleasure seemed slipping away from us.

"Perhaps the house is sold out and the ticket-sellers have gone home," sighed Polly. No theatre is without its hanger-on, who, if not the rose, would be near the rose, and a loiterer without the sacred picket, seeing our longing looks, came to our aid.

"If you are looking for tickets," he said, "here comes one of the young men. He will take you to Mrs. Sinclair."

To Mrs. Sinclair! into the very presence of the manager!

We approached timidly and were soon following the youth through the yard of the Northwick Arms next door, dodging behind sheds until we finally emerged in a broad field, where were gathered a colony of travelling-vans. The young man led us to the brightest and smartest of these little houses on wheels.

"Here's some ladies as wants good tickets, Mrs. Sinclair," he called out. We had told him our business. A smiling, pleasant woman

appeared at the door and invited us to climb the ladder-like doorstep into her home. We mounted with beating hearts. All our desires were being fulfilled at once. We were going to see the play, and, better still, the inside of one of those vans whose possession we envied the commonest peddler.

Mrs. Sinclair lived in no gipsy fashion. The outside of her van was as beautiful as a state carriage; the little windows were adorned with boxes of trailing nasturtiums and curtained with lace. Within, the cosy sitting-room had gas "laid on," an open fireplace, a sofa and easy chairs, and goldfish swimming gaily around in a big glass globe among the plants inside the window. I never took much interest in goldfish before, but goldfish who lived in a travelling-van became instantly different from those who only migrate once in life from a bird-shop to a nursery window or dressmaker's parlour.

The question of tickets was settled speedily. We got the best places at eighteen pence each, and then were invited to inspect Mrs. Sinclair's "little 'ome" and "h'airy bedroom" next to the parlour. Clean and tidy it looked to us, although we were begged to excuse the disorder because, the lady of the house said,

she had been "turnin' out," in other words, putting her belongings in rights.

"The kitchen is in another van," she told us; "we don't like to smell up our little 'ome."

Polly and I longed to be invited to dinner, or even to tea, but time was flying; there were signs of activity in the acting colony.

We saw figures going in and out of the stage-door in the distant theatre, and Mrs. Sinclair told us that, although half-past seven was the usual hour for beginning the play, they sometimes opened earlier, if the crowd around the door was great and vociferous. We had learned that the Victoria Theatre travels from Evesham in the summer to Shakespeare's own town, Stratford upon Avon, for the winter. The Victoria Theatre is a theatre rich in financial advantages. The scenic artist is leader of the orchestra, painter and musician. The dramatist most popular with the audience is a member of the company, all royalties being thus directed into the home treasury. The company of actors is largely a family affair. I fancy that costumes and properties are also home-made.

Pasteboard is saved by the ingenious method of writing the name of the patron

of the expensive seats upon a bit of paper, which is put in the box-office to be called for. Another praiseworthy custom of the Evesham theatre is the selling of half-time tickets. If you dine late, you come late and pay less; or, if you go to the play and are not pleased, you can leave before the play ends, and so save money.

"Would we could do the same thing in New York," said Polly, whose economical soul is often tortured by the inability to get her money back when she is too bored to sit through a play.

Our friends hailed our plan with joy, and, although we hurried through our dinners, the attendance before the gates must have been numerous and noisy that night, for, when we arrived, shortly after half-past seven, the play was in full blast and the house crowded to repletion. There were no half-time tickets sold, I am sure; the play was too stirring. The drama dealt with an occurrence near Evesham some hundred years ago, and was called the "Camden Wonder."

A man named Harrison, the agent of an estate, was out collecting rents, when he was seized by ruffians, hurried on board a ship, and finally sold as a slave. His servant, one

John Perry, none too strong in his wits, went clean daft under the stress of fright and anxiety, and declared that he had murdered his master with the help of his brother and of his mother, who were tenants of the man Harrison. So plausible was the crazy man's confession that not only he, but his mother and brother were hanged, in spite of their frantic protestations of innocence. Long years after this tragic event, the missing man returned, to the horror of all concerned. It was this stirring local tragedy we went to see, and it had lost nothing in the hands of the actor-dramatist. The scene-painter, too, had produced marvels of nature on the canvas. The orchestra had a lugubrious *motif* for the miserable, sad servant, which was played every time he dragged his weary shape across the stage.

Each act had numerous scenes. A sprightly London detective of the nineteenth-century type was introduced, to the delight of the three-penny seats, — called by courtesy the gallery. He was a little out of place in the eighteenth century, but he fulfilled his mission and spoke up boldly.

We missed the first view of Mr. Harrison. When we were ushered into our cushioned

bench, he had left the scene in bitter anger because John Perry's mother could not pay her rent, but also because in the delinquent tenant's cottage he found his son making love to a girl "too poor to be his wife." Our sympathies were thus at once enlisted against "old Harrison," as he was called throughout the play. We did not see anybody when we came in but John Perry, a dark-visaged individual who had neglected to comb his hair, and who found great difficulty in moving his jaw when he spoke, greatly to the disgust of the three-pennyites. He had a ball-and-chain walk, and we were against him from the first, but he told us all the news.

A quick change of scene gave the London detective a splendid entrance in disguise. He captured two highwaymen just by way of showing what he could do, and put the thrip'nnies in such a state of excitement that they had to be quelled by the ringing of a huge dinner-bell.

There were no evening dresses or stupid conventionalities at the Victoria Theatre. The air was thick with smoke, and a sentiment of home-like liberty prevailed. An orchestra of one piano, one cornetist, and two violins dispensed music appropriate to the

drama, and a brilliant drop-curtain, representing a scene in a world of imagination, occupied with its mysteries the intervals between the acts.

Local dramas are highly popular at the Evesham theatre. We longed to stop over for "Evesham in 1730," to be given the next night. We were assured by a speech made by one of the leading characters before the curtain that this drama was resplendent with great effects of costume, electric lights, and scenery.

A friend who had once been present at another exciting play, "The Battle of Evesham," told us that the queen in this drama, gorgeous in splendid robes, stepped out of the fireplace, which served as well for a portal, and, holding up her jewelled finger, said, "Hush!" while the equally magnificent king sprang forward, surprised and delighted, shouting, "My Yelenor!"

We believe this to be calumny. We lost many points, doubtless witty and brilliant, owing to a somewhat immovable jaw with which several of the actors were afflicted, and a lisp or two among the actresses interfered sadly with their coherency, but the accomplished elocutionists of the company treated

the dreadful letter "h" with respect. It was weak at times, but we felt its presence always.

The morning after our theatre-party treat, we took our way toward Derbyshire by way of Tewkesbury, the town of the great battle, of the great abbey, and of the great novel by Miss Mulock, "John Halifax, Gentleman."

Bright and early we bade a sad farewell to our comfortable lodgings, to the roses, to the thrushes, the trees, and the river, and we promised our gentle hostess to come back to her some day. The Invalid filled the air with lamentations and regrets for the sights left unseen; the Matron sighed for more picnic teas by the river; Polly rejoiced in the small amount we had drawn from the treasury.

Tewkesbury is only fourteen miles from Evesham, and we wished we might have found it possible to go there by the motor-car, but we could not arrange it to every one's satisfaction, so we were forced to go by the Midland Railway. It is a pleasant journey by rail, and pretty little stations lie all along the route. At Ashchurch we had the choice of waiting an hour for the train on the branch road to Tewkesbury, or of walking two miles. This was an easy matter to decide on a day when the sun shines down clear and bright

on a broad, straight road, such as the station-master pointed out to us. The foot-path worn along the side proved that we were not the only impatient souls who objected to waiting at Ashchurch Junction.

"We are getting to walk almost like English girls. We have gone two miles in less than an hour," said Polly, as we saw the beginnings of Tewkesbury on either side of us.

It was not so much of a feat, for the road is perfectly even and almost without a curve. We had arrived before the train.

Tewkesbury streets, full of ancient half-timbered houses, have forgotten all about time. They are still dreaming of the Wars of the Roses and the rule of the abbots. As we made our way up the Church Street to the abbey, the irregular, overhanging gables, the projecting galleries of centuries past, filled our souls with artistic delight. At the end of it, almost blocking the way, stands the Bell Inn, a most perfect specimen of sixteenth-century architecture. It was the house which Miss Mulock took as the home of Abel Fletcher in her novel.

"We will eat our luncheon here, and talk about John after we have seen Tewkesbury," decided the Matron.

The Abbey Church is just across the street from the Bell Inn. The street takes a sharp turn by the side of the inn, and we did not see the great church behind the trees of the churchyard until we were quite in front of the Bell. It is almost a cathedral, — rough and bold, as are all Norman structures.

The exterior of Tewkesbury Abbey Church is bold rather than beautiful. It is strong, solemn, symbolic of the times when it was built. The interior is very impressive.

"The grandeur of this nave, its great, simple columns, stirs my religious nature very deeply," declared the Matron, and we all silently agreed with her.

There is nothing so genuine, so imposing, as the pure Norman. Norman architecture is a frozen choral. The tombs about the choir are of much more ornamental character. One of them, which is built about a horrible effigy of a monk long dead, has the richest workmanship. It is said the upper part was the model for the canopy for the throne in the House of Parliament. We were told the brave little prince, last of the House of Lancaster, who perished so cruelly in the battle of Tewkesbury, was buried here in the abbey, together with many of the nobles who were

THE BELL INN, TEWKESBURY

killed on that fatal day. The Despencer, who made himself hated as a king's favourite in the time of the first Edward, was laid under a magnificent tomb, but it was entirely destroyed at the time of the dissolution. The Duke of Somerset, beheaded in Tewkesbury market-place after the battle, the Duke of Clarence, who chose to perish through Malmsey wine, Lord Wenlock, and many of the Despencer family, lie here under fine tombs. Among these ambitious, warlike dead is a tablet to the memory of Dinah Maria Mulock, — Mrs. Craik, — who wrote the immortal history of a gentleman, a book as fresh, as delightful to the young generation as it was to their grandmothers, and which will bring more pilgrims to Tewkesbury than all the great fighters now lying at peace in the Abbey Church.

Tewkesbury has changed but little since Miss Mulock's time. The Bowling Green, where readers of the novel will remember that John Halifax and Phineas Fletcher had one of their first intimate talks, is behind the Bell Inn, and the entrance is still through the kitchen and fruit garden, — "a large square, chiefly grass, bounded by its broad gravel walk; and above that, apparently shut in as

with an impassable barrier from the outer world, by a three-sided fence, the high wall, the yew hedge, and the river," — so Miss Mulock described the place. The yew hedge is immensely tall, and over it can be seen the square tower of the Abbey Church. There are comfortable arbours, where tea is served from the inn, and the hedge has been cut away on the river side, making a lookout in this direction upon the narrow Avon. The mill, once belonging to the abbots, which Miss Mulock makes the terrible scene of poor Abel Fletcher's angry madness, is still standing. Beyond and far away over the green we could see small white sails on the Severn, which seem to skim along the meadows, that is the broad plain on which York and Lancaster ended the War of the Roses in the one great decisive battle of Tewkesbury. Peaceful grazing cattle and a few boys with long fishing-rods are the only dots on this huge land where once men fought so savagely, brother against brother.

" It is big enough to furnish a battle-ground for four armies at the same time," said the Invalid.

None of us have had enough warlike experience to disagree with her. We know that

here poor, unhappy, ambitious Queen Margaret made her last stand for her husband and son, and that here the brave young Prince of Wales, crushed by the insulting blow from Edward of York's gauntlet, fell and was stabbed to death; and that the weak husband, Henry of Lancaster, paid the price of this fight by death in the Tower. Along the river-bank near the mill an ancient group of houses are still standing which we like to think were there on the day of the great victory of the House of York.

The narrow lanes and crooked streets we have read of in "John Halifax" still lead down to the banks of the Avon. Inside the Bell the low, square rooms with high, plain oak wainscoting, where we eat our lunch, the countless queer cupboards in the corners, the dark, winding staircase and the uneven floors, all speak of an age as great as the abbey ruins. Our association with the house, however, concerns that more modern and very real personage, John Halifax, Gentleman, and we enjoy our lunch much better for feeling sure we are in that room where, "to Jack's great wrath, and my (Phineas) great joy, John Halifax was bidden, and sat down to the same board as his master."

We walked down the narrow, winding street on our way back to the station, with enough time before us to stop and admire the interesting old buildings which have been so well preserved. Tewkesbury was in a fair way, some thirty or forty years ago, to lose most of its architectural treasures through neglect and carelessness. Fortunately, some art-loving citizens took the matter in hand, many of the decaying buildings were restored, the modern ugly plaster fronts were torn off of others, the fine ancient carved beams and supports thus exposed to view, the old casements mended, and the curious gables preserved. During the course of these restorations some wonderful old bits of architecture were discovered, and now the visitor to Tewkesbury town can gaze on work done in the fourteenth century, or even earlier. House fronts are here which looked down on the armed men of the king-making Duke of Warwick, and on the gay doings of Elizabethan nobles.

"It is cruel to rush us away from this delightful old place," said the Matron, with her nose deep in the sixpenny "Hand-Book of Old Tewkesbury;" "there are enough delicious old houses to keep me busy for a week."

"Then you must come back again," said stern Polly, flourishing the through tickets she had bought at Ashchurch. "Our luggage is labelled Rowsley, and probably on its changing way to Derbyshire at this very moment."

"Tewkesbury is not entirely without modern comforts," observed the Invalid. "There is the bill-board of the opera house."

"And what a play!" exclaims the shocked Matron. "Here, with large, respectable families of small children tumbling out of every doorway, they present 'The Gay Grisette!'"

The Treasurer softly laughed at the Matron's virtuous indignation, and then shooed us along like hens to catch our train.

"I don't see why we did not walk all the way to Ashchurch," was what we sang in chorus. The station seemed about two miles from the centre of the town, and a long part of the walk was through such ugly new streets that we were sorry to have discovered them in delightful old Tewkesbury. But, before the train took us off, the view from the station platform of the winding Severn River, and the battle-plain with the high hills of Malvern, looking down at a blue distance on the square tower of the Abbey Church rising

among the trees, shut out the remembrance of the shabby new villas.

"Good-bye, Tewkesbury!" sighs the Matron. "We are off for an afternoon on the exciting railway of Great Britain, but, if we had known how enchanting you were, even our Treasurer should not have hurried us away from you."

# CHAPTER V

PEACOCK INN

Rowsley

THE way from Tewkesbury to Derby is through Burton and Birmingham, and that is a tale of a smoky, dull lookout. The air had become misty, and the sullen atmosphere of these great manufacturing cities had spread over all the intervening country. Of course we changed at Birmingham, but luckily we had no wait there, and soon got beyond the cloud which hung over busy Derby before the sunset hour.

A chipper old gentleman invaded our carriage at Derby, and at once began conversation by asking us if we were off for a tour. When, by our answer, he discovered us to

be from the United States, he at once proceeded to enlighten us about the small towns we were passing.

The mist was rising in the meadow-land which lay far below the track, and beatified sheep and legless cattle appeared grazing there on clouds, dipping their heads solemnly into the ethereal food; the sky was full of the glory of an after-sunset glow, and the mist took from it the soft tints of rose petals. Here and there on the side of the hills were mysterious swirls, as though the elves were starting out for an evening lark under a cloud just their size.

The old gentleman left us at a station with the surprising name of Whatstandwell, after he had filled us with local information. At Duffield, he told us, lived George Eliot for a time, when she was writing "Adam Bede," a novel which has its action among this scenery and in the town of Derby. There is also at Duffield the remains of a great Norman castle, which must have been very splendid in its day.

At Belper a great plague devastated the whole town early in the seventeenth century, and in its churchyard fifty-three of the victims lie buried. We didn't see much of the

ON THE WAY TO ROWSLEY

town at the time this sad tale was being told us. We were then under the earth in one of the numerous tunnels hereabouts, but we trusted the old gentleman. Where Whatstandwell got its name we failed to discover. Our chatty acquaintance left us so abruptly that not until he had departed did we see the extraordinary name of his home village.

The scenery became after this, with each mile, more interesting. Derbyshire at first looks somewhat dreary to eyes accustomed to the smiling gardens and orchards of Worcestershire. The gray rocks crop out of the dark green hillside, the houses are built of dull-coloured stone from the near-by quarries, and long lines of carefully constructed stone fences stretch away for miles. The river Derwent winds and twists, first on one side of the track and then on the other. The narrow valley is here a picturesque gorge, with the villages of Matlock Bridge and Matlock Bath hanging on the precipitous sides and looking like bits from Tyrol.

Rowsley is a little dark group of stone houses lying together in the hollow, and it is not until we had left the train that we saw how broad the valley had grown since we looked out on Matlock Bridge, or how much

more smiling the soft green hills became when topped with purple at the twilight hour.

It is but a step down the road from the station to the Peacock Inn, a hostelry noted all over England. The house was built as a hunting-lodge for the Dukes of Rutland. The date above the door is 1552. Ivy climbs all over the porch, sparing only the carved peacock which crowns the top. It drapes with its shining green the stone casements, and even encroaches upon the roof. The entrance-hall is low and square, with those decorations of rods and guns so dear to the sportsman. The serious old lady who came forward to inquire our wishes had all the airs and graces of a duchess. Her black silk gown, her lace collar, and her lack of the usual hostess's welcoming smile rather disturbed even Polly's assurance. She heard our names, acknowledged our telegram, and waved us off to the care of a maid, who, quite as seriously as her mistress, conducted us to our sitting-room.

Polly as usual recovered first from the chill, and began to order about the maid in her haughtiest manner, a proceeding which had the desired effect. All our small belongings were carried humbly before her when she went to select the bedrooms.

"The flowers at least are giving us warm greeting," remarked the Matron, as she looked out through glass doors upon the beautiful garden, skilfully hidden from the road by a stone wall and tall shrubs and trees. We had not even suspected there was a garden as we passed on our way from the station. The twilight was shedding a misty spell over the great clumps of many-coloured flowers with which the smooth lawn was broken, and the maid, less stolid since Polly had disciplined her, was laying the cloth for our dinner, so we wandered out upon the gravelled path, down to the river which bathes the foot of the garden.

"Which is this, the Wye or the Derwent?" demanded the Matron.

"You won't know this evening," answered Polly, "for the maid, of course, can't tell, and I *won't* ask the Duchess."

"The Wye goes in detached pieces all over the map of England, so we will say it is the Wye until we know better," decided the Invalid.

That satisfied the Matron for the moment, and the little murmuring stream, no wider than a brook, went whispering over its stones indifferent to a name, the water so clear that,

even in the fading light, we could see tiny fishes darting about. It curved away here at the edge of the garden walk, then ran under two bridges and thickly clustering trees, an ideal spot for a poetic fisherman. Somewhere beyond our sight the Derwent went bustling along, and the two waters met on the other side of the town, before a charming little house, to tell each other all the gossip they have gathered in their long running.

The moon came up and joined herself to the picture before we went in to our dinner, and the next morning all the fog and mist had vanished, leaving only a few diamonds on the rose-petals in the garden.

We were off for Haddon Hall before the trippers arrived from Bakewell, or the first tourist train from the north had discharged its sightseers. The walk is from the Peacock, through the straggling village street, and then over the fields until suddenly Haddon Hall shows itself among the trees, breaking the side of the thickly wooded hill.

So much has been written and said of this ancient dwelling-place of peaceful noblemen, untouched since the finishing touches were put to the last building in 1696, that any description is only an oft-repeated tale. The

THE PEACOCK INN, ROWSLEY. — ROWSLEY STREET

race of Vernons of Haddon Hall was a race of wise, politic men, men who knew how to capture heiresses, and always to keep on the right side in royal disturbances. They built their home for peace, not war, and war left them unmolested.

Haddon Hall is a striking example of how the inequalities of a hillside may be turned to the greatest advantage in architecture. Walls that sink low in the foreground, towers and battlements that start up in the background, a broad terrace looking over a green precipice at the side, and a wide gateway by which the upper courtyard was entered from the road at the hilltop. This is how Haddon was built. Great forest trees grow above, behind, and on all sides of the Hall, while down from the walls to the roadside roll billowy meadow-lands.

We were the first sightseers to arrive. There was not a tourist in sight when we paid our fee of fourpence, and were admitted into the first courtyard. The keeper's daughters, very bright, intelligent-looking girls, were preparing for the day as we entered, arranging the photographs and guide-books for sale on the table under the gateway.

" I think you ladies may wander on by your-

selves, if you choose," said the elder girl, smiling. "You would not scribble on the walls, I am sure."

"Not unless our name were Pummel," muttered Polly, with recollections of Winchester.

The girl promised to join us before we got to any locked doors, and cautioned us about the dangerous stairways, so we strolled about the bare rooms around the lower courtyard; into the chapel, the old kitchens, and the great dining-hall with its raised dais, where old-time feasts were held, and where at Christmas the monstrous Yule log burned in the great chimney, and peacocks were served dressed in their feathers, with their proud tails spread over the roasted flesh; where the boar's head was carried high, and followed by a long train of pages.

The Vernons built the Hall at Haddon as they needed it, putting up here a set of chambers, there a lady's bower, and again a tower when they wanted space for pages. They began to build the present structure in 1070, and the south aisle of the chapel, together with portions of the wall along the south front, remain to show what was done before 1300. Then the great hall and kitchens were built, and the upper court began to grow.

Before 1470 the east part of the chapel and the east side of the upper court were finished. Between that date and 1550 the inside of the building under the long gallery was finished, including the enchanting little dining-room, carved and wainscoted to the very top, where are to be seen the portraits of King Henry VII., his queen, and his jester, Will Somers, carved in the wainscot. The west range of buildings was put up and the west end of the north range built at this same period.

By 1524, the entire outside of the Hall was finished. Sir John Manners, the husband of Dorothy Vernon, finished the ballroom, notwithstanding the romantic legend that makes him steal away that fair lady during a dance in this same apartment. He even built the steps down which she is said to have eloped. Being a most eligible match, a husband of whom her father thoroughly approved, it is not in the least likely that she had to run away at all.

This ballroom — the long gallery as it is called — is one of the most beautiful rooms in England. The crest of the Manners first appears here, where on the frieze the peacock alternates with the boar's head, the rose and the thistle.

The great square recesses of the many-paned windows look out at an enchanting view across the loveliest terrace known to artists. Out of the great gallery is the bedchamber consecrated to Queen Elizabeth. We believed firmly in the relics of her visit, even to an ingenious wash-list said to have been used by her. Whoever owned this laundry-list wore "shirtes and half-shirtes" and registered the number sent to be washed on a disk very like a perpetual calendar, a most clever contrivance in a day when writing was not popular.

With the exception of a few pieces of furniture in this wing, Haddon is completely dismantled. Fine old tapestries hang on the walls, and in some places have furnished many a meal for the all-devouring moth. The great-great-grandson of Dorothy Vernon deserted Haddon to make his home at Belvoir when he became Duke of Rutland by the failure of heirs in direct line. It is said that the inconvenience of the various stairways at Haddon led to the final desertion of the Hall as a place of residence. Many of the apartments are quite exposed, and most inconvenient, but, with the maze of rooms which lead out one from another, and the lack of corri-

dors, these outside staircases are the only means of entrance to many of the apartments.

"Haddon would make a delightful home, I am sure," was the comment of the Matron, but so much restoring would be necessary to make the Hall habitable that its present perfect character might then be entirely destroyed. We felt, after a few hours in the old place, that it was better to reconstruct it in our imagination than to have any part of the ancient buildings touched by modern hands.

We walked slowly back under the oaks of the park, along the banks of the Wye to Rowsley, and by following the little stream to its meeting-place with the Derwent discovered which one of the rivers murmured along below the garden of the Peacock.

"I knew it was the gentle Wye. The rushing Derwent of Matlock Bridge could not change its temper so suddenly," said Polly.

It is quite possible to walk from Haddon to Chatsworth across the hill, but we had lingered at Haddon until long after lunch-hour, so we decided to leave the Duke of Devonshire's great place until the following day.

"And we may escape the crowd if we go early."

Our brilliant garden at the Peacock, little Grey Rowsley village, and the broad moor on the hilltop beyond the railway station, served to fill our afternoon hours with occupation and pleasure.

From the steep road which winds up the hillside to Beeley Moor there were lovely views. Haddon Hall, its slender, gray, square towers and graceful lines, were visible among the dark oak-trees of the hill on our right, the great white Chatsworth Palace far away lay in the lowland on our left, with the magnificent undulating park spreading about on all sides over hill and dale.

The clouds hung low on Beeley Moor late in the afternoon when we finally climbed to the hilltop, but great patches of yellow furze spread over the rough ground like waves of warm sunshine. When we left Rowsley for Hardwick the following day, we rode across this high moorland, by the road poor Mary, Queen of Scotland, followed often with Bess of Shrewsbury! That lady was too jealous of her lord, when she looked after her building at the new hall at Hardwick, to leave the fair prisoner with him alone at Chatsworth.

Early though it was when we got to Chats-

worth, before the hour named in the guide-book as the opening time, we were not the first arrivals. A great "charry-bang," as the natives called this particular sort of conveyance, had disgorged a party of twenty trippers. Heaven knows where they had fallen from, but they were good British subjects of the tradesman class, each armed with a shilling to buy an admission ticket, and with a store of stolid admiration which would find no outlet in unnecessary words.

A gorgeous Mr. Bumble, in gold lace and bright cloth, looked at us all condescendingly through the grating of the entrance portal until the clock struck the time of admittance, when he kindly opened the gates and amiably took our shillings. He then marched us away over the court, and delivered us silently into the hands of a solemn-looking housekeeper, who trotted the whole party quickly through the mansion. Not a glimpse did we get of the treasures we knew to be in Chatsworth, and which we really longed to see.

Claude Lorraine's wonderful sketch-book was locked up at the library. We only peeked through a glass door, and most of the original sketches by great masters, over which we

longed to linger, were covered with linen curtains.

"'Ah, *that!* "The Burgermaster" it's called, by Rembrank, I believe. It ain't nothink much! Only a work of h'art! Not one of the *family,* you know,'" quoted Polly from *Punch,* while we halt at malachite tables "from the Czar of Russia to the duke," New Zealand canoe presented "the late duke," and portraits of race-horses of the duke's stables, which the housekeeper-shepherdess, with the good English flock at her heels, halts long and lovingly to gaze upon.

"Given to the duke by the Emperor of Russia." Ah-h-h-h!

"Won a great race for the duke." Oh-o-o!

"Sent to the duke by the savages!" Eh-e-e!

The shepherdess had a lesson, and she said it well, without changing a word.

Polly indulged in low-spoken criticism on the great, sprawling frescoes.

The Invalid objected to the excessive display of carved woodwork.

The Matron had to be dragged away from a Landseer picture.

Altogether my party was troublesome, and not properly impressed by the magnificence of this great palace.

After racing us through the house, the shepherdess delivered her sheep into the hands of a shepherd, who steered us around the great gardens ("jardeen," he pronounced the word). He pointed out every tree planted by royalty, while the Matron made disparaging remarks about the architectural beauties of Chatsworth House, and the Invalid admired the gilded window-frames. My companions were not at all in the proper spirit, and I was glad to get them out of the gate of this innermost sanctuary, into which hordes of sightseers were waiting their turn for admission. Dog-carts and carriages, drags, a couple of motor-cars, and bicycles by the score were waiting, and more were coming over the road down the hill.

"Think of the shillings Bumble will collect!" sighed mercenary Polly.

As we had assuredly walked several miles while we stared at "The Duke's" possessions for nearly two hours, we were ready for luncheon.

The park at Chatsworth is a great natural tract of woodland and meadow sweeps. The Derwent goes rushing through, falling down artificial weirs, and watering the banks of a great rabbit city, where little cottontails frisk

about under the very feet of the fallow deer.

We made our way to the Devonshire Arms just outside of the gate of the park, but the number of vehicles about the door made the Invalid stop short and declare she would never make one of that crowd.

"We sha'n't get anything decent."

"And be charged three shillings for it," said the Treasurer.

"I saw a dear little cottage back in the park, with a 'Tea' sign hung out," the Matron told us.

So back we went to the dear little cottage buried in flowers. There was no perceptible path leading to the door, but we ran down one green bank and up another into the garden. A cheery woman offered us tea, eggs, some cold ham, bread, butter, and jam, a feast which we devoured among the sunflowers and dahlias, and paid one whole shilling each for our pastoral luncheon.

After this we passed on our way to Edensor, a modern village built for those employed on the estate. Within its church lies buried that Earl of Shrewsbury who was the keeper of Mary, Queen of Scots, and the husband of Bess of Hardwick. His tomb is a most re-

markable construction, erected by his lady to his memory and to that of his brother. Not content with henpecking the earl as long as he lived, and of turning him out of his own mansion that she might bestow it upon her sons, in death she denuded him even of his flesh. He lies in effigy, a bare skeleton, while his brother is wrapped in a marble winding sheet. The state robes and armour, carved in stone, hang by the side of the tomb. The shrewish countess cannot disturb the earl's last sleep in Edensor unless she comes a long way. Her body lies buried in Derby. Edensor church is a specimen of the ugliest architecture of 1867. It replaces one that was built in 1545, which was taken down to make way for the present very commonplace structure.

The surroundings of Chatsworth House will ever be interesting as associated with the ill-fated Mary of Scotland. The great oaks looked down on the weary walks of the captive queen, and the bubbling river echoed her sighs. The old mansion in which she was confined was destroyed by fire. Mary was kept there many years, her only excitement being intrigue and flirtations with her jailor, the Earl of Shrewsbury. Nature and education had done everything to make Mary

irresistible to the male sex, and she kept the Shrewsbury household in a state of commotion which was not conducive to her own comfort, and rendered life miserable indeed for the earl.

Our shortest way back to Rowsley was along the river-bank, where we saw the trout in the stream, and the frisking rabbits, which are so tame that they do not even skurry away to their warrens as we pass by. We managed to spend our entire day in the park, and enjoyed every moment, although we all agreed that the great palace interested us less than was altogether proper for right-minded tourists.

"The house looks to me like an overgrown piece of furniture," criticized the Invalid, with her bold and republican air.

## CHAPTER VI

### HARDWICK INN

"THE Duke and Duchess of Devonshire are in Scotland," was what the Invalid read reverently and interestedly from the court news.

"Then we can visit Hardwick Hall. How shall we get there?" asked the Matron.

"By driving," was the reply of the busy Treasurer. "The distance is about ten miles. It will cost us about four shillings or less each. We could go by train, but that would not be so pleasant. We should then be obliged to go back over our way here to Ambergate, change there, and then go over the other side of the triangle to Mansfield, wait there for a

train to Hardwick, and when we get to the Hardwick station we should still be two miles from the inn. As I have planned it, we can start from here to-morrow at about ten o'clock, and we shall be at Chesterfield in time for luncheon. I have wired to the Hardwick Inn, and the landlord will meet us at Chesterfield and take us over the rest of the road."

"As you have evidently settled all the plans, we shall be content with your decision," said the Matron.

Polly's plans were good. The sun shone for us, the air was neither too warm nor too cool, and we drove away over the moor in a comfortable carriage. The driver complained of the condition of the road, which, to our American eyes, seemed not at all bad, for it is a wild district. A lonely farmhouse among desolate-looking fields now and then broke the monotony of the scene. The whole of the moorland was fenced off by stone walls, but furze and bracken were the principal crops we saw until we got to the edge of the plateau beyond the Red Lion Inn. Here the high ground fell away suddenly and a smiling plain appeared, and the road goes down-hill nearly all the way thence until the twisted

steeple which distinguishes Chesterfield came in sight.

"They say the devil twisted it," was what our driver volunteered, in answer to our exclamations.

"It looks like the devil," murmured our wittiest member, irreverently.

Chesterfield is an ugly town, as ugly as its great church and twisted steeple. There was nothing to interest us there, and rougher-looking men and women we had seen nowhere in the English country.

The road from Chesterfield to Hardwick is a broad highway, leading through the coal-mining district of Scarsdale. It is the only road in our travels on which we saw untidy homes, squalid children, and dreary, flowerless, bare yards before the cottages. Low hills covered with green were in the distance, but nearer to us were chimneys belching forth smoke and flame, great heaps of coal-dust, and villainous-looking tramps. We had forgotten the existence of such creatures in our rural wanderings.

It was a relief when we left the broad highway for the narrow, wooded road, where Hardwick Hall soon showed itself, its many

windows shining upon us from among the trees on the hilltop.

The inn guards one gate of the park. It is as secluded and sequestered as though there were no collieries within a thousand miles. A very old hostelry it is, and belongs to the Duke of Devonshire. The bright little sitting-room and four or five good bedrooms are charmingly furnished in modern style for the guests at the Hall, which is not large. The Duchess of Devonshire sometimes finds it convenient to send the gentlemen of a house-party here to sleep when her own stately bedrooms are quite full.

We were very fortunate to time our arrival when the Hall is vacant; so the innkeeper's wife tells us. When the duke is not in residence, his sister, Lady Louisa Egerton, often occupies the house, and then no visitors are allowed to see the delightful interior. We were more than glad, because, next to Haddon, dismantled, old Hardwick, almost untouched since the days of Queen Elizabeth, and full of remembrances of the remarkable woman who built it, is one of the Halls we had most desired to visit.

A curving avenue leads to the Hall from the gate of the inn, but there is a short cut

HARDWICK INN

climbing by grassy steps up the steep hillside. The park is dotted thick with ancient oak-trees, their withered branches standing out sad and solemn against the sky. The duke will not allow the leafless boughs to be lopped off. He rightly thinks they suit the ancient park.

Hardwick Hall, "more windows than wall," stands surrounded by a courtyard, and isolated from the green lawns of the estate by a high wall resembling the house in its architecture. It is square and solid, with the spearlike ornaments so fashionable in Tudor days decorating the top. The interior of the courtyard is a bright carpet of flowers spread before the noble entrance. The letters E. S., with which the Countess of Shrewsbury ornamented the top of the towers, and which stand out clear against the sky, are repeated by the skill of the gardener in the flower-beds of the courtyard.

Very near, outside the enclosure, are the ivy-grown ruins of the house in which the builder of the present Hall was born. It is the old Hardwick Hall, the dwelling-place of Elizabeth's ancestors, and which she dismantled and tore down in order to get materials for the more modern structure. The

Countess of Shrewsbury not only had the building mania, but she was filled with dread of death should she cease erecting walls. A soothsayer had told her that when she stopped building she would stop living, and, strange to say, she died when the frost of winter once kept her workmen idle. To be sure, she was then at the ripe age of eighty-seven.

"Quite a proper age to die," observed the Invalid.

Hardwick Hall was built at the time when Mary, Queen of Scots, was detained at Chatsworth, but it was not finished until after her execution. One of the chambers is furnished with hangings said to be embroidered by that unhappy captive, and the bed and other objects in the apartment are purported to have been used by her. They may have been removed here from the Chatsworth House. Possibly the chamber might have been prepared before the Hall was finished. It is certain that Mary often rode over here with the countess while the building was in progress. In the entrance-hall of Hardwick there is a marble statue of Mary and a screen which is pointed out as a specimen of her needlework.

This hall is adorned with a fine mantelpiece of the (parget) raised stucco, so popular in

Elizabeth's day. All over the mansion there are examples of the very best style of this kind of ornamentation. In the great hall appear the Hardwick arms supported by two stags, while in the presence-chamber there is a wonderful parget frieze. It represents a hunt of Diana and her nymphs. Not only are there stags, but all sorts of astonishing animals, known and unknown, lingering under marvellous trees until the huntress shall choose to pursue them. This splendid work is coloured, and extends all around a room which is sixty-five feet long. Great square bay-windows break the design on one side. But, wherever it is possible to find space between them, a tree fifteen feet high spreads its branches over an elephant about the size of a stag, or the eager huntress is seen, surrounded by her dogs, pictured quite as big as the elephants.

Throughout the mansion the furniture of the period when the Hall was first used as a dwelling is still preserved, and the chairs and tables are all fine specimens of the taste of the days of Queen Elizabeth.

The great picture-gallery extends the whole length of the front, one hundred and sixty-six feet. The windows in this gallery are said

to contain twenty-seven thousand panes of glass.

"How ever do they get them washed?" asked our practical housekeeper, the Matron. That feat is evidently accomplished. They were clean and shining enough for us to see that the portraits were hung over the superb old tapestry as if it were the commonest of wall-paper.

"Do you suppose Queen Elizabeth gave her portrait to everybody at her court?" queried the Invalid, as she studied attentively a picture of that overdressed virgin.

"No, Queen Elizabeth was not so extravagant," answered Polly, promptly. "She took, she did not give. She allowed her subjects to order portraits of her from the great artists, and she kindly consented to sit. Thus did she patronize art." How Polly knew all this Elizabethan gossip, we did not question. Polly knows everything, *that* we do not dispute.

The memory of the unfortunate Arabella Stuart is inseparably connected with Hardwick Hall. The Countess of Shrewsbury was her grandmother. Arabella's mother was the most amiable of daughters, and it was by force of maternal ambition that she was married to

a younger brother of Lord Darnley, and a possible heir to the Scottish crown. This prince, who had been sadly neglected all during his youth, was on his way to Scotland, where his mother, who had married in England, was taking him to get a wife. The party got no farther than Hardwick Hall. Bess made their sojourn so pleasant that she captured the young man for her own daughter, and in 1575 little Arabella Stuart was born.

Her life here with her grandmother was far from pleasant. Queen Elizabeth had been perfectly beside herself with rage when Bess married her daughter, Elizabeth Cavendish, to one of the Stuarts, and it was only after many attempts that the queen had taken her subject again into partial favour. When Arabella was born, the queen especially stipulated that the child should never be allowed to marry.

Little Arabella was painted as a child here at Hardwick, and her picture hangs with the other notabilities in the long gallery.

"Bess may have been able to build lovely houses, but she certainly did not know how to dress this unfortunate baby," declared the Invalid.

The little girl is represented in a brocade of pink flowers and green leaves. The dress has great, stiff sleeves confined by bracelets at the wrists, and covered with an ugly cape of the same material coming up high about the neck. A hideous pompadour of false red hair crowns her pathetic little face, and on a chain she wears a pendant in the shape of a heart surmounted by a coronet. The device, *"Pour parvenir j'endure,"* the poor little soul surely never chose for herself, although she lived up to it, alas!

"It sounds like an inspiration of her grandmamma," was Polly's theory, "and the poor little girl did endure, but her arrival was misery."

This grandmamma, Bess of Hardwick, had managed before her death to marry four rich husbands, and to persuade them to give her all their possessions, to the exclusion of their own children. She was not beautiful, she was masculine and domineering, although she is said to have been witty. That she was not strong in book-learning is revealed by her ingenious way of spelling *"orcus,"* meaning *horses.* She was a builder, a buyer and seller of estates, a money-lender, a farmer, and a merchant of lead, coals, and timber; she was

of masculine understanding and conduct, proud, furious, selfish, and unfeeling. Such was the grandmother with whom the child, who had inherited the affectionate disposition of her mother, was forced to pass all her young days. Arabella was sweet and pliable, but she hated the constant hunting and feasting in which her grandmother delighted. She loved books and learning, read the Greek Testament in the original, and was sentimental and romantic.

"Like most quiet women," commented the knowing Matron. As none of our party could be dubbed quiet, we therefore agreed with the Matron's analysis of character.

Arabella's grandmother was enormously rich, her income at the time of her death being two hundred thousand pounds. Although she strictly forbade "all superfleuete or waste," she entertained lavishly, and the unhappy little Arabella had to sit on the dais at the end of the great hall where we entered, and keep still through interminable courses of —

First, roast swans, venison, pheasants, pullets, pigeons, and pasty tarts of divers hues and sundry denominations, followed by mighty joints, with veal pies, capons, black cocks, chickens, partridges, and two kinds of

bread, marchpane and coarse cheats, a few potatoes, no other vegetables, and ending with sweets, jellies in shape of animals, trees, houses. A great piece of sugar-work representing a fortress, or some such thing; conserves of fruits, gingerbread, marmalade, and numerous comfits.

With this the guests drank ale, mead, and wine, served in silver and sometimes Venice glass, and the feast was eaten in perfect silence.

Arabella's romantic nature pined for love, and she escaped the vigilance of her guardians by secretly marrying William Seymour. She paid a bitter penalty by imprisonment in the Tower, followed by insanity and death. The room she occupied at Hardwick Hall is hung with tapestry, representing cupids guiding a boat through smooth waters, the attendants on the banks garlanded with oak and ivy, and following the stream.

" Poor Arabella! This was the only smooth water her life ever knew."

In an adjoining room hangs a portrait of Bess of Hardwick, a sharp-featured lady, with red wig, a black dress, and thick ruff, and a chain of magnificent pearls around her neck.

Her wig is topped by a small black cap and flowing veil.

She died, as the chronicle says, "continually flattered but seldom deceived, immensely rich, without a friend." She left, however, this charming dwelling-place, and her descendants have preserved it as a perfect specimen of one of the most delightful treasures of the Elizabethan Age.

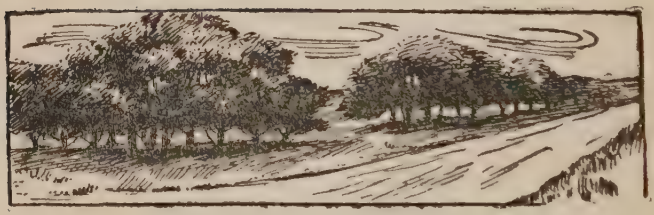
The park embraces six hundred and twenty acres of woodland, with broad sweeps of meadow on which graze cattle and deer. There are drives, a lake, and stretches of fine trees. Toward the side where Hardwick Inn lies, close at the foot of the hill, the ground falls from the Hall steeply down to the oak-bordered lake; but above, where the house stands, is a broad plateau covered by the greater extent of the park.

The fine stables built by Bess of Hardwick are still used by the Duke of Devonshire, who often houses his race-horses here.

Thomas Hobbes, a philosopher, who was afraid of the dark, was a member of the household during the life of Bess of Shrewsbury. He was tutor to her children, and lived nearly all of the ninety-one years of his life at Hardwick, after he first came there at twenty-one

years of age. His portrait hangs in the gallery.

The brightness, the beauty, and the comfort of the apartments at Hardwick so enchanted the Invalid and the Matron that we could scarcely get them back to luncheon at the inn, and they returned for another look at the interior before four o'clock (the closing hour), while Polly and I were wandering under the trees in the park.



# CHAPTER VII

## THE DUKERIES

BESS of Hardwick numbers among her descendants many of the most noble families of England. Within riding distance of the birthplace of their ancestress, the Duke of Portland, the Duke of Newcastle, and Earl Manvers, all members of the same distinguished family, have those great estates in and about Sherwood Forest, which are embraced under the title of The Dukeries. These great landed properties were acquired by Bess during her lifetime. She built one house at Welbeck, and began another great manor at Worksop.

We drove the first five miles from Hardwick Inn to Bolsover over a delightful country road without seeing the sign of a collier anywhere. For a mile or more, after leav-

ing the inn, the road goes through the park, and then past several charming farmhouses toward Bolsover.

Here there is a fine castle built by Sir Charles Cavendish, one of the sons of Bess of Hardwick. An old keep, dating from Norman times, furnished the foundations of the present house, and there are also remains in a great riding-school or stable of some of the work done here by King John.

Sir Charles evidently admired his mother's taste in architecture, for Bolsover bears a close resemblance to the Hall at Hardwick. A short distance from the smaller house, on the keep, Sir Charles built a magnificent palace fronting a wide terrace. This was erected for the reception and entertainment of King Charles the First and his queen. Within its walls the monarch abode on three occasions, and here for the royal pleasure "rare Ben Jonson" wrote his masque, "Love's Welcome." The poet was master of ceremonies during an entertainment which cost Sir Charles Cavendish £70,000. This splendid dwelling-place for royalty was dismantled by the Roundheads, and has now become one of the most picturesque ruins in England. The great windows and doors are draped with

BOLSOVER CASTLE

ivy, and stupid sheep now climb down the ruined steps and browse along the terrace where once the gay courtier strutted on his high heels, making love to the simpering coquette of the court of King Charles.

The Duke of Portland owns Bolsover, and in the ancient house first built by Sir Charles no one now is living. It is in perfect repair, and among other curious decorations is a room which the loyal Sir Charles built in imitation of the Star Chamber of hated memory.

We found that we could only see the interior of the house by means of a ticket from the agent of the estate, which we had neglected to secure. Neither shillings nor pence (we did not try pounds) could shake the guardian's sense of duty, so we were forced to content ourselves by staring at the outside of the windows, and by wandering about among the grass-grown halls of the great ruins.

Polly and I almost slid down the steep hill trying to get to the railroad station, where we proposed to go to find out for ourselves the very best train for Edwinstowe. We left the Matron and the Invalid to go back into the town and order something we might eat before we started on our journey.

Looking up from the station, Bolsover Castle resembles a captain of the Middle Ages leading a straggling company of soldiery. Behind the tall pinnacles and points of the house on the keep, rising sheer from the top of the trees which cling to the sides of the precipice, Bolsover streams away on the top of the ridge, and the many-coloured roofs give a motley air to the crowd. At the end trail stand two miserable corrugated iron huts, looking like shabby camp followers.

We found the Invalid and the Matron in the village street engaged in a heated discussion with the town policeman. They were standing before the Swan Inn, which has a most enchanting exterior, and is quoted as the chief hostelry in Bolsover by the guide-books. Yet the Matron had been obliged to appeal to the police to get even such little food as we needed.

"Inns there are in plenty. We have been to them all, but they only sell drink, not a morsel of food, and we are very hungry," explained the Invalid, as she threw one of her appealing glances at the man. He at once breaks forth into offers of assistance. He marched sternly at the head of the party to the Devonshire Arms, gave a thundering knock

at the door, whereupon a trembling female appeared and offered to provide us with everything she had, — "ham and eggs and a little tea."

"Bolsover lives on simple diet," whispered Polly to me, with a sigh.

"I thought perhaps the policeman would take us to his home after your fascinating appeal," said the Matron to the Invalid.

"Perhaps he has nothing there to eat, but beer," answered the Invalid, as we mounted the stairs to an uninviting sitting-room and prepared to satisfy our longing for food.

"What a horrible town to be caught in at night-time," said one.

"No beds, nothing to eat, and nobody here but drinking miners," offered another.

"You forget the policeman," put in a third.

"I can hardly bring myself to believe that such inhospitality exists in England," was the sigh of the fourth.

Bolsover was once a market-town. The picturesque old inns, the Swan and the Angel, were in those days not given over entirely, as at present, to the sale of liquid refreshment. The Devonshire Arms, where we were so unwillingly served with ham and eggs, is a new

hotel. Polly questioned the small red-headed servant who waited upon us, and she said that food was seldom asked by the colliers and their friends. There were no lodgings at any inn in the town.

We shook the dust of inhospitable Bolsover gladly from our heels, as we scampered down the hill to the train. We had enjoyed a fine ruin, seen a noble castle, and nearly starved to death. The train we took stopped at countless small stations; the engine puffed and worked hard to pull us up steep grades before we saw *Edwinstowe* in large letters on the station sign-board.

"I thought we were coming to Sherwood Forest. Where is the wood?" asked the Matron.

A huge plain with a track winding off on a high bank extended as far as we could see.

"There are certainly no *trees here,*" cried the others in chorus.

A porter stood ready to take our bags; the daylight was waning; dinner-hour was near at hand. I had never been near Sherwood Forest in my life, but I waved my hand vaguely toward some bushes in the distance, saying: "Look! the trees are over there."

The cloudy evening came to my rescue, for the daylight kindly flickered and went out.

The porter took us to the Dukeries Hotel, which the Matron had chosen from a picture in the guide-book.

"This house is modern enough!" said Polly, as we entered. "It is nothing but an American seaside hotel, with an English coat on."

As soon as we were inside the door, we saw before us the cheap stairway with machine-carved banisters, a stained-glass window on the landing, and we were led to narrow bedrooms with hotel furniture that would bring blissful memories to the heart of the true citizen of the United States.

"Do you suppose we shall have buckwheat cakes for breakfast?" plaintively sighed the Matron.

But if the architecture of the exterior dated from the fifteenth century, and the interior workmanship from the last sweet fashion of New Jersey's coast, the bill of fare at the Dukeries is, and always will remain, truly British. We need no menu. We know what we shall have to eat without that: Clear soup, fish, roast mutton, potatoes, perhaps Polly's favourite, vegetable marrow, and a tart. A

sweetly simple cuisine, innocent of flavour, with as little salt as possible.

The following morning at breakfast, the Invalid began conversation by remarking that Sherwood Forest seemed very far away and the coal-trains very near.

"Several times last night I expected an engine or two to run in and share my bed," she wailed.

"I am sure I heard a man being murdered in the house," chimed Polly, cheerfully.

"Nonsense!" said I. "He had the nightmare. I have heard those same sort of groans before. The walls are so thin, I could hear every one of you women breathe."

"Come find the forest; it must be hiding in the neighbourhood," said Polly.

"When we find it, we will stay there," said the Invalid.

The forest proved to be not so very far away. We walked through the village street of Edwinstowe, an ugly little collection of houses all packed close together on a road lacking even the usual village curve. Two manor-houses are hidden away behind high garden walls, a few uninviting hostelries, some modern brick houses, and a shop in which everything, from canned corn to a

A GLADE IN SHERWOOD FOREST

photograph, is sold. A cottage at the end of the street is made pretty by festoons of Virginia creeper, but otherwise there is very little that is attractive about Edwinstowe. Finally comes a strip of common, and then we plunge from sunshine into the heart of a forest.

"The glades of the poets and the oaks of the drawing-book!" was Polly's admission.

Under our feet lay a carpet of ferns, and great oak-trees towered over our heads. The sunlight shot down thin bright rays between the green bowers, touching here and there the silver trunk of a graceful birch, or the smooth bark of a great beech-tree.

"It is the real Robin Hood wood out of the picture-books. Where is Friar Tuck? He must be waddling along here somewhere."

"There are the Merry Men under the trees."

But the Merry Men turned out to be only labourers picking up the dead branches, which look like long bows. The Matron declared Fontainebleau but a puny duchy compared to this kingdom of green. Here veteran oaks stand about in companies, nodding stiffly to one another like aged men, while their great roots grasp the green earth with mammoth claws. Solemn, dignified, taciturn,

they lift their bodies, gnarled and ancient, above all the other trees.

In Sherwood Forest the strong individuality of the oak is very marked. If its life be truly, as they tell us, three thousand years, some of these forest oaks before us must have looked down upon mighty changes, for they now seem nearing their term of existence. Misshapen and buffeted by storm and wind, their hearts are so consumed by age that we can crawl into some of the hollow trunks and find there room to lie down. Models of tenacity and courage, these aged oaks refuse to give up life, and send out from the wreck of their existence one or two branches bearing shining, bright, green, healthy leaves.

The oaks at Hardwick seemed sad. They are trees for a forest, not for a park. Like sturdy peasants, they will not thrive in high society. In Sherwood, however, the oaks are with their kind in a great wood, as they have grown for centuries; the birches and the beeches keep company apart, while the firs look on from a distance.

Polly admitted that, while "all trees seem human to her, the oak has the strongest personality."

Paths are cut through the forest in many

ways under the thick trees, and roads branch off in all directions. The strong mossy turf takes no mark from the hoofs of passing horses, and on its smooth surface wheel tracks make little impression. The general public may not drive upon the grassy avenues, but all persons may walk wherever they will. No flowers grow here under the greenwood trees; the air is filled with the songs of birds, the rabbits frisk, and the cock pheasants strut about boldly. We caught sight of the red brush of a slinking fox, stealing along after his prey.

Sherwood was the haunt of Robin Hood, Little John, and Will Scarlet and the Merry Men all. Here the outlaws followed the lucrative profession of robbing the rich and slaughtering the king's deer. The great oak where Robin Hood hung his venison is still pointed out, and there is another huge one under which he fought the Lion-hearted Richard. (The guide-book says so.) Neither of these trees show any signs of decay, so incredulous Polly pretended they were bushes in Robin Hood's day.

Thoresby Park, the estate of Lord Manvers, is in the depths of Sherwood Forest. Within the park limits are the most magnificent old

trees and a wood as wild as it was centuries ago. Earl Manvers will not allow one of the oaks to be felled until Nature herself, or the elements at her command, shall lay them low.

The hall at Thoresby is of modern construction, and was built in the Elizabethan style. It is not open to the public, but the house can be seen from the road through the park. Monday, Thursday, and Saturday are the days on which the public may drive through the three great estates which join one another between Worksop and Edwinstowe. The road goes through the private grounds of Earl Manvers, the Duke of Newcastle, and the Duke of Portland. We spent our afternoon sitting under the oaks, and sent Polly to make arrangements for The Dukeries drive.[1]

[1] THE DUKERIES POSTING ASSOCIATION

*Fares from Edwinstowe*

| | Per Head |
|---|---|
| To Welbeck, Carburton, Clumber, Appley Head, Normanton Inn, and Thoresby | 3*s.* 6*d.* |
| Welbeck, Clumber, and Thoresby | 3*s.* |
| Welbeck, Carburton, and Budby | 2*s.* 6*d.* |
| Thoresby and Clumber | 2*s.* |
| Thoresby, via Buck Gates | 1*s.* |
| Major Oak | 6*d.* |

Our itinerary included a trip to Rufford Abbey, about three miles distant, and quite as much an object of interest as the oak-trees. The road leading there is bare and uninteresting. The abbey is now the property of the Savilles, but the modern repairs have quite obliterated all remains of the ancient monastery. The Matron flatly refused to go. She said she preferred old oaks to new houses, a term not strictly proper for Rufford Abbey.

"You will find us by the Major Oak when you have settled the carriage business," the Invalid told Polly. We trudged off with a tea basket, and, before the kettle was boiling, Polly appeared to tell us of the arrangements made. We are to have another morning in the forest, and then start off after an early lunch on the road through the parks of Thoresby, Clumber, and Welbeck, and from

The Duke's Drive, Shepherd House, and Ollerton Corner . . . . . 2*s.*
Budby, Carburton, and Normanton Inn . 3*s.*

Easter and Whit Tuesdays, and all Bank Holidays 6*d.* per head extra.

The Park Drives are open on Mondays, Thursdays, and Saturdays only.

Welbeck Abbey open Daily until 4 p. m., except Saturdays, when it is closed at 12 noon.

there we are to go on to Worksop to stop overnight. Four shillings apiece our drive will cost, and our bags and bundles will go with us. One more night made hideous by the coal-trains to the light sleepers of our party, and then we are off to new sights and sounds.

We took farewell glimpses in the morning of the light filtering down through the trees in the forest before we started off under a heavenly blue sky, in a comfortable wagonette, on one of the most perfect drives possible.

Thoresby House we only saw across the water of a small lake. The formal garden near the mansion is the only artificial note in the entire landscape. The whole park is in the wildest part of Sherwood Forest, and the Matron insisted upon being disappointed because Earl Manvers did not bury his house in the wood like a fairy castle, therefore Polly instantly entered on a long discussion of the subject with her. Polly is practical, and likes warmth and sunshine more than poetical surroundings. She approves of the open formal garden. The drive through Thoresby Park took us past miles of splendid oak-trees, and then out of the gates into Clumber, where the Duke of Newcastle has his domain. Here the

grizzled oaks grow scarce, but all around fir and larch mingle with the silver birch, and in the famous Lime Drive, an avenue of perfect trees which goes on for three miles, the foliage is so dense and so beautiful that the trunks of the trees are almost invisible. At the end of this quadruple row of magnificent limes we came out in full view of Clumber House. A great sheet of water bathes the steps of the terrace. Clumber House was built at the time of the Georges, and is no more picturesque than any of the other princely dwellings of that period, but the view across the water rather softens the imperfections in the architecture, and the broad lake and background of waving green lends a charm the house otherwise would not possess. There are great treasures of art and literature in the vast rooms, but the Invalid and the Matron refused decidedly to leave the sunshine to be hurried about by the housekeeper; Polly and I also found it remarkably easy to deny ourselves that questionable pleasure.

"We can read all about it in the guide-book," said the indifferent Invalid.

"I for one," announced the Matron, "do not care at all to see other people's houses

unless they give me some suggestions for my own. These palaces are of no use to me."

Polly and I were struck dumb by the Matron's peculiar reason. Imagine any one gleaning ideas for a small country house from a palace the size of Clumber.

The estate of Welbeck joins Clumber, and we drove on through a woody park, much more carefully laid out than either of those we have seen, until we arrived at the gate, where we left the carriage to visit the sights seen at Welbeck Abbey. The many tales we have read of the late duke, of his eccentricities, and the underground apartments he built, had filled us with delightful curiosity. Our disappointment was great, therefore, when we found we could visit nothing but the Riding-School, which is frankly above ground, the kitchen-garden, and the shrubberies.

This was another case of what Polly calls "the vagaries of British information." The guide-books we bought assured us that it was easy to see the famous underground rooms; the keeper of the Dukeries Hotel declared that any one could visit these apartments, and even our driver reiterated the statement that they were open to the public, "but you may have to give an extra fee."

This condition we were more than willing to fulfil; therefore, after paying the customary shilling, and receiving a ticket of admission to the Riding-School and the kitchen-garden, Polly stealthily approached the civil guide allotted our party. To our surprise she fell back from his side with a despairing look on her face.

" For two years past, these rooms have been closed to the public. All the furniture of Welbeck Abbey is packed into the underground apartments, while the house is being restored after a very bad fire," she told us.

It will be three or four years more before the house will be opened again to the public, the work is going so slowly. We were forced to content ourselves with the little we were allowed to see. The Riding-School was built by the late Duke of Portland, who, like his ancestress, Bess of Hardwick, was afflicted with the building mania. He had an army of men working about Welbeck all the time, and he accomplished an enormous amount of building. If the work done by his architect did not suit him, as sometimes happened, after it was quite finished, he simply summoned the workmen and pulled it all down

again. Underground rooms and long tunnels through the ground, and passages only lighted from above, this queer duke constructed in all directions.

It is a disputed question why this very peculiar man fled from the sight of his fellow men and enjoyed living underground. The splendid Riding-School is an extravagant piece of work. The birds of England, each nesting in its favourite tree, are finely wrought in beautiful coloured bronze to make a frieze running around the ring 380 feet long by 104 feet in width. The great glass roof is arched and springs from graceful iron pillars which divide the centre ring from the broad passage running around the sides. We were treated to a glimpse of one concealed passage as we left the Riding-School. It leads to the house and is lighted by skylights which are concealed on the outside by the shrubbery and the turf. The walls, damp and green, extend for nearly a mile under the earth. From this passage we came out upon a most lovely sunken winter garden, and we here could see the doors and windows which led to the noted underground picture-gallery and ballroom, said to be the largest rooms in all England.

Our guide had been five years in the service of the eccentric duke before he died. He told us that any servant found wandering in these concealed passages during the old duke's lifetime was instantly discharged. From the winter garden we stepped out into a rose-garden four hundred feet long and half as wide, sunken below the turf of the lawn. The old duke had built here great walls of Portland cement, and had planned an apartment which he called a Bachelor's Hall (although he intended admitting no bachelor but himself to its privacy). He died before these walls were covered in, and the present duke, a cousin, loves air and the sun, and has draped the unfinished room with ivy and planted the great floor with beautiful roses.

The lake at Welbeck is the biggest, the deer park is the biggest, everything is the biggest. The offices and the stables and the houses of the employees form a town; there is a fire department. We, being simple folk, found our minds somewhat confused by all this vastness, but we could not refrain from admiring the wonderful order and great care bestowed upon this huge park, the lake, the garden, and all the buildings on the estate.

Welbeck has thirty-two acres of kitchen-

garden and an immense glass-house for tropical plants, fruits, and vegetables. We walked through an arbour four hundred feet long, of which one side was formed by pear-trees and the other by apple-trees trained over iron arches and mingling their fruit over our heads. Along by the side of this remarkable arbour is an apricot wall of equal length, the trees in espalier all thick with shining fruit hanging from the branches, spread out to catch every ray of the sun.

The house is not very beautiful from an architectural standpoint. It is vast in its dimensions, but quainter and older than Chatsworth. The pleasure-grounds around the mansion, which reach down to the great lake, are lovely in the extreme, and on the green slope opposite browse a herd of pure white deer.

Outside the great gate, but still within the limits of the estate, is a picturesque little group of houses called "The Winnings." The Duke of Portland has erected these houses as homes for his aged servitors with the money won by his race-horses. The origin of these artistic little dwellings is explained by an inscription carved in stone on the central house:

"These houses were erected by the Sixth Duke of Portland at the request of his wife for the benefit of the poor, and to commemorate the success of his race-horses in the years 1888, 1889, and 1890:

"Ayrshire — Two thousand guineas and Derby, 1888.

"Donovan — Derby and St. Leger, 1889.

"Memoir — The Oaks and St. Leger, 1890.

"Semolina — One thousand guineas, 1890."

There are six houses, each with two bedrooms, a sitting-room, and a kitchen, and all are artistically and comfortably furnished.

The way on to Worksop is through one of the long tunnels built by the late duke. We passed the remains of Worksop Manor-house, which was begun by Bess of Hardwick. Although the building was never finished, the manor-house as it now stands is a mansion by no means to be despised for its size.

Worksop is a commonplace little English town, with all the characteristics of one of that sort. The wagonette left us at the Royal, a little slice of a hotel in the principal street, sandwiched between a bank and a bake-shop. It is spotless and clean, if not very large. The Matron's bedroom took up the entire front

of the house, and the rest of our rooms fill a whole wing at the back of the house. The Invalid looked out of her window upon a blank wall and heaved a mighty sigh of relief because the noise of no coal-train can reach her ears to-night. Worksop has the ruins of a fine priory with a superb gateway, now fast falling into decay, which led into the monastery grounds. The Church of the Priors has been restored; it has fragments of Norman work about the doors, and in the nave and side aisles. Other than by these, our walk in Worksop was unrewarded by any subject of interest save a photographer's shop, and even there we could get no good pictures of Sherwood Forest. After our walk, we had our supper, and each one food to her own liking. Polly ordered eggs, the Invalid fish, the Matron chicken, and I, a slice cut from the joint. After this feast, which put us in high good humour, we retired to the Matron's sumptuous bedroom to talk over future plans, and had just settled our affairs for the morrow, when Polly sat down on a deceptively comfortable chair in the corner. Being a fraud and a delusion, with only three legs, the comfortable seat collapsed at once. This incident broke up the meeting, but not before

we had decided for Lincolnshire the next morning, to see the Fen Country and Old Boston Town, which some of our ancestors left for the bleak coast of New England.

We bid good-bye to Worksop early in the morning, knowing we must change our train at Mansfield. The stupidity of a railway porter made us miss our train, so, instead of reaching Boston at two o'clock, we did not get there until nearly sundown. This loss in the end proved a gain. Polly and I, who were highly indignant at what we supposed would be a long wait in Mansfield, were busily making life miserable for the booking-agent, who was serenely listening to our remarks behind his little window, when a pleasant old gentleman standing by said, civilly: "Why do you ladies not go to Newstead Abbey instead of spending four hours in Mansfield? To-day is visiting-day, and I am sure you can get back in time for your train."

Thanking the old gentleman for the welcome proposal, we returned to the attack on the booking-agent.

"Is Newstead so near?"

"Only five miles," said the booking-agent. "There will be a train going in five minutes. Three single thirds? Sixpence each."

We seized the tickets, got a porter in hot haste, deposited all our bags in the cloak-room, and hurried the Invalid and the Matron over the bridge into a waiting train. Before they had time to ask us where they were going, we were rushing along between green mounds and great black hills of refuse, thrown from the coal-pits, before we explained to them that we were *not* on the way to Boston.

Between Mansfield and Newstead we passed Annesley, the home of Byron's early love, Mary Chaworth. We could not see the house from the windows of the train. It is among the thick trees on the slope of the hill. About the station at Newstead are piled black, uninviting signs of prosperity and coal, but the lodge-gates of the abbey are near and when they are passed the wide meadow-lands extend far on either side of the avenue.

The distance from the station to Newstead Abbey is a good long mile, and the private road begins almost at the station gates. The first half-mile of the avenue is planted on either side with very young trees. It must have been that the wicked Byron, who preceded the poet as owner of the estate, cut down the forest trees. At the second lodge, the

destruction was arrested by an injunction served upon the miserable old uncle, and thence the avenue winds about wooded knolls covered with fine trees and thick underbrush. When the little gem of a monkish dwelling appears in the hollow, it stands against a background of thick green. The clear blue sky made colour in the great ruined window of the dismantled church, while the fine foliage of the garden trees was seen through the doors and portal of its ruined façade. The garden covers the space once occupied by the church. The house, which extends along beside the ruin, has been restored nearly to the same state in which it was when the monks were driven forth. The long windows of the abbot's refectory, now the great hall, are above the low entrance door to the abbey. Colonel Wildman, who bought the estate from Byron, spent £100,000 in restoring and fitting up the house. What he left undone has been finished by W. F. Webb, Esq., whose descendants now live here.

The Byrons were a sad lot, as every one knows, and had not Lord Byron made a place for orgies out of the mansion he so loved and of which he was so proud, he might have kept the estate with which he was forced to part.

We found here in Newstead Abbey a most interesting and interested housekeeper who showed us through. She was as much enamoured of Lord Byron as were the ladies in his own time. She kept repeating to us, as she took us through the rooms in which he had lived, and exhibiting some relics of the poet:

"Pore thing! Pore fellow! I think that he might have been better, and quite different perhaps, if *some one* had only loved him."

To be sure, his mother was not exactly the kind of a woman calculated to train in the right way the sort of nature which Lord Byron possessed, but the sentimental housekeeper's admiration was not shared by Polly.

The old Chapel House, wherein Lord Byron kept his dogs, and which was in a most ruined condition during his lifetime, has been restored by the present owners. The little dining-room, where he and his boon companions sat often and long, is exactly as he left it; so is his bedchamber, and the room (said to be haunted) where slept his page. The cloisters, the almonry, and the stone staircases appear as though left by the abbots but yesterday. The water trickles from a quaint old fountain, with weird beasts carved upon it,

in the close, and the furnishing and fitting of the house is in every respect appropriate for the severe style of architecture. The lake, when we saw it, was being drained and cleaned. At the time when Byron nearly drowned in it, he was saved from death by his faithful Newfoundland dog, Boatswain, and the tomb of this devoted friend is in the garden within sight of the windows of the great drawing-room. The painting of the first Lord Byron, to whom the king gave this estate, hangs here on the wall, together with the well-known painting of the poet.

The little housekeeper lamented sorely that Byron had not known of the presence of coal at Newstead. Her affection for the dead poet was touching.

" He would have saved all this if he'd only had that money," she told us. She always loved his poetry, she said, and admired his personality when she was a young girl, and the privilege of now living in his former home was a romantic joy to her. It was a novel pleasure to meet an English housekeeper who permitted her mind to entertain other ideas than those connected with the mere duties of her position. Only the fear of losing another

train forced us away from this entertaining little guide.

Newstead Abbey has harboured other distinguished guests since Byron left it. Livingstone, the explorer, often lived here for months at a time with Mr. Webb, who was his friend, and here he wrote much of his great work. There are several interesting relics of the discoverer in the same gallery where is preserved the uniform worn by Byron during his last days in Greece.

"Shall we ever get to Boston?" asked the Matron, falling panting into the train for Mansfield. Polly's entertaining quotations from The Real Lord Byron had so absorbed our attention that we had deliberately walked out of Newstead Abbey gates into the wrong station, and were only saved by an accident from sitting there all day. Both the Great Northern and the Midland Railroad have stations at Newstead, and both lines run very near the park gates. This we had not noticed when we arrived, and on our departure we went carelessly into the first station we saw. Luckily our sixpence back to Mansfield had not been paid, and when, at ten minutes of train-time, no booking-agent appeared, Polly started off on an exploring expedition. Pres-

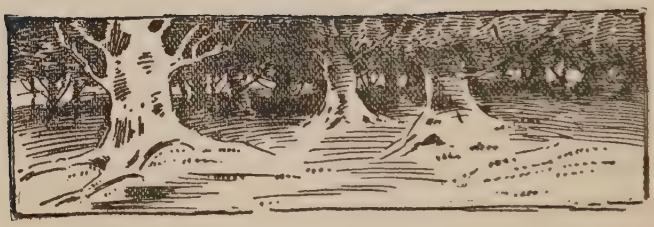
ently we saw her at the extreme end of the platform, talking to a porter, and making wild gestures to us, then quickly starting off to run down the road. We followed her blindly, — we invariably did, — and reached the Midland Station just in time to tumble into a carriage.

"So glad you got here," gasped Polly. "I ran ahead, because I knew the obliging train-guard would wait for you if I asked him."

In the Mansfield station, where passengers change cars and lose trains and wait hours, there is no refreshment-room. By asking many questions, and asking them of many people, we learned that the town proper, and food, lay within five minutes' walk of the station.

"It is lucky for us that we have not, as usual, two miles to tramp before we come to the market-place," was the Invalid's comment, as we started down the steep hill beside the station and entered on a broad space filled with booths. It was market-day, but, as no signs of "Luncheon served" appeared in any window of the market-place, we turned hurriedly down a narrow street, where Polly pointed with glee to the sign, "Oriental Café."

These establishments, not as Eastern as the name promises, are to be found in all provincial towns, and they are an oasis in the desert to the hungry English tourist. We got an excellent cup of real coffee, together with a light, substantial luncheon, for a very reasonable sum.



# CHAPTER VIII

THE PEACOCK AND ROYAL

Boston

"WE are actually on our way to Boston at last," said the Matron. We had left nothing behind in Mansfield but a few shillings, and we rode on slowly as far as Nottingham, where we were obliged to change again. There were no lace curtains in the station at Nottingham, much to our disappointment. There appeared, however, two very fat rams dyed a deep red. Their war-paint had evidently struck inward, for all the porters were engaged in trying to conduct the belligerent animals from one van to another. When the warlike beasts were not engaging one porter with their horns, they were executing flank movements on the others with their hoofs. The battle was so exciting

that we quite forgot about our train until industrious Polly seized a porter, luckily too small to resist her, loaded him down with belongings, and, before he knew what was being done, had steered him into more peaceful quarters — the Boston train.

The prize rams were still fighting for liberty. Nottingham Castle disappeared through the smoke of the busy town, and then we were off through the country, — a billowy country with very little woodland. The train passes near Belvoir Castle, built on a high ridge. It looked very like Windsor through the haze of the afternoon. The Dukes of Rutland have been living at Belvoir ever since they deserted Haddon Hall, or, rather, they have been living there since the younger branch of the Manners family succeeded to the title.

Not long after passing Belvoir and Sleaford Station, we came into the Fen Country. When the Puritans left Lincolnshire for America, this vast region was a savage tract, desolate, uncultivated, full of bogs and ague. The inhabitants were a rude people who barely managed to exist by the crops they got off the small patches of land they reclaimed from the water. Now all this is changed. The Big Drain flows along beside the track

as wide as a canal, and is spanned by bridges more or less picturesque, and at intervals smaller drains run from all sides to meet it. The fields are fertile and the farms look prosperous.

The style of architecture so much admired, and so continually copied by the early settlers in New England, is the architecture of the Lincolnshire Fens. Square houses with long, slanting roofs, a door in the middle, and one or two windows on either side of it, can be seen here in brick, quite like the wooden reproductions that predominate in the old towns about Boston, Mass. Before the Fens were drained, the roofs of the cottages were made of the reeds so plentiful in the district, and this must have added a decidedly picturesque quality to the little dwellings now made ugly by dull slate. The reeds have disappeared with the reclaiming of the land, and we were told that it was hard now to find a good thatcher in this part of Lincolnshire.

The dampness of the flat lands here is responsible for the loveliest atmospheric effects. Over this otherwise uninteresting plain there spreads at the sunset hour a most wonderful colour. The air glows like gold, the drains glitter like molten metal, and the wide

fields and commonplace houses become glorified by the light of the hour. It was through this golden mist that we first saw the tall tower of St. Botolph's Church — the Boston Stump, as it is called — looming gray before us. We had reached Boston at last, after all our troubles!

Following the advice of a lady who happened to be in the carriage with us, we gave our luggage to the 'bus driver to take to the hotel, and walked there with our new-found acquaintance by a short cut. Our guide was a Boston woman, and knew the road, or we surely should have found ourselves as completely astray as does the Western stranger in Boston, U. S. A.

On the street leading from the station, down which we followed the Boston lady, the low brick houses were all exactly alike, and out of them poured forth large families of dirty children. After two minutes' walk through this uninviting beginning of the town, the street suddenly stopped, and we stood above the parapet where the river ran swift beneath, and we looked across the water at the great tower of St. Botolph's Church shooting up into the red sky.

This is the finest view in Boston, and, as

ST. BOTOLPH'S CHURCH, BOSTON

we saw it in sharp contrast to the dull commonplace street by which we had come, our enthusiasm was correspondingly great. From this spectacle we understood plainly why Boston is said, by the English, to look like a Dutch town. Along the river gorgeously painted fishing-boats were making their way out at high tide to The Wash. Bridges spanned the river, and gardens grew along the side behind the high walls required to curb the River Wytham's ardour. As a tidal river, it has a way of climbing over barriers and even at intervals invading the great church. Boston has no pleasant recollections of these frolics. They have wrought horrible destruction, and once nearly destroyed the whole town. From the river-bank we went to the bridge, through a distracting maze of narrow lanes, before we reached our hotel on the market-place, as Polly observed, "quite Bostonese."

The Peacock and Royal is a commercial hotel of cheerful aspect. The front is decorated by bright flowers and long trailing vines growing from the window-boxes on the balconies, and above all is a most gorgeous sign of the most gorgeous of birds, from which it takes its name. We ate our comfortable little dinner in the coffee-room, our table

placed in a "Dendy Sadler bow-window," behind one of which the Matron has always pined to sit. It was nine o'clock before we left the table. We were too tired to explore Boston's winding ways, and, as it was too early for bed, I had this time secured a large front room looking over the market-place, and my sleepy friends soon found entertainment there.

The sound of a twanging banjo, which came from beneath our window, gathered the few stragglers in the market-place into a circle around the door of the Peacock. We could not see the musician from our window, but he broke forth as soon as the audience had gathered into the usual sentimental ballad dear to English ears. Some boys, with dogs at their heels, formed the outside of the meagre crowd, and then from a side street came belated mothers, pushing their babies home in perambulators. Polly says that at no hour in the twenty-four are English streets entirely free from perambulators, and, late as it was, three of these useful carriages joined the circle, the mothers, in true Boston fashion, being unable to resist music. The audience grew larger and the circle wider; the songs were succeeded by dialogues, and coppers rained plentifully into the collector's

hand, until a baby set up an opposition concert, and an enterprising dog was encouraged by the noise to fight his four-legged neighbour. During the rumpus which succeeded, the musicians vanished. The dog riot was finally quelled, the babies trundled home, and the market-place in a few minutes was absolutely deserted for the night.

Next morning unwonted sounds of activity got me out of bed at an early hour. Booths were being put up for a market.

"We cannot seem to get away from markets," the Matron said. "There is one in every town we visit. We left the weekly market yesterday in Mansfield to find it to-day in Boston."

Little houses on wheels are drawn clattering over the stones, and take their places all in a row near the inn. Then signs are hung out on each, announcing that within wonderful seeds and infallible means of making the seeds grow are to be purchased. The many canvas-roofed booths are soon taken in charge by buxom market-women. They pile up fruit and vegetables which speak well for the fertility of the Fen Country in each of these. We could hardly wait to finish our breakfast, so interested did we become in what was going

on in the little outdoor shops. A descent into the market-place revealed that they were not only occupied by market products, but several were given up to the sale of the most wonderful and tooth-destroying sweeties ever invented.

"No wonder there are not teeth enough to go around in England!" exclaimed Polly, as she pointed in horror to a perfect copy in extraordinary candy of the Royal Crown. Bright red sugar on top, with deadly yellow confection below and silver stuck on above ermine trimmings, it is as astonishing confectionery as can be imagined. Piled high above the insignia of royalty were great cakes at least fifteen inches around; a brilliant scarlet gelatine was smeared on top and orange-hued candy appeared beneath. Pounds of a dark brown brick-like sweet were piled up beside sugar sticks of surprising manufacture that were at least two feet long and two inches thick.

"The motto goes all the way through the stick," proudly announced the vender, as he broke up for our admiration one of the great clubs, — pink on the edge, white in the middle, with "Give me your heart" in black. These marvellous sweets sold in packages of

various weight from a penny upwards, and disappeared more quickly than their outward appearance would warrant.

There were baskets so enticing in another booth that the Matron and the Invalid walked all around town laden down with wicker purchases. Onward we strolled through the market-place, delighted with everything we saw, and Polly had hard work to fix our wayward attention long enough to tell us that John Fox was born in a house where now stands an inn called "The Rum Puncheon."

"What a jolly name for an inn," said the Matron, who cares nothing for celebrities. The Invalid exclaimed "Fox's Martyrs" at the same moment (that is all she knew about him, probably, though she looked very wise). The quaintest old building on the market-place stands next the Rum Puncheon, and is called "The Angel." We forgot John Fox and all his writings at the next toy booth with its penny wares. There were barrel-bodied horses, solemn-looking dogs, and very woolly sheep, all of which the Matron wanted to take home with her. The English children show the national love of animals by the toys they choose.

Who has spent a day in old Boston and not heard the town-crier? On this particular market-day that functionary, in a somewhat shabby, sombre brown suit, brandishing a huge, shiny bell, held the awestricken pink-cheeked market-women entranced while he recited, in a stentorian voice, the dismal news: "A ter-r-rible murder! Three victims dead! Murderer at large!" jingling his bell so dismally that involuntarily we looked over our shoulders, getting nearer to the loud-tongued bell, as though it could protect us. The most enterprising member of the group hurried to the corner news-stand, and came back with *The Boston Post,* wherein we read that the murder had been committed fully twenty miles from the crier's bell, so we might safely resume our explorations in the town without colliding with the escaping wretch.

St. Botolph is at the farthest corner of the market-place from the Peacock. We strolled there among the booths and peered over the high wall, which protects the church from the water, to find the rushing river of the night before was reduced by the outgoing tide to the merest ditch. About St. Botolph's Church still remained a close, with queer-looking, ancient structures with steep, curious gables.

The church architecture is very foreign in style, but modern English taste prevails in the restored interior. The tower, piled up so high, lacks that finish on top, which only its nickname, "The Stump," describes.

A very narrow lane between the old houses, marked "Worm Gate," led away from the close. That the languages are cultivated in this town was evident from a sign we saw there in a tiny shop:

"L. KEPER, TAILOR D'HOMMES."

We left the Worm Gate on the broad road along the Maud Foster Drain. Why *Maud Foster* nobody knows, but, as such a person is known to have had business relations with the corporation of Boston in 1568, it is supposed that the lady allowed the drain to be cut through her property on condition that it should be called by her name. It is as wide as a small river, has high walls on either side, and the irregular red houses with the windmill twirling above them is another touch of Holland. John Cotton and his friends did not take *all* the east wind over the ocean with them when they left home. A good portion of it we found blowing furi-

ously along the Maud Foster Drain. We turned from the drain to the Wide Bar Gate, a long open space of pens, filled with red cattle and thousands of sheep for market. Above the homesick bleating of the sheep arose the tones of "Rule Britannia," which were being flung into the teeth of the east wind by a choir of small boys who had swarmed up on a monument made of cannon acquired in some bygone Boston victory, and were bawling the tune to please the shepherds. The Invalid soon began questioning a handsome farmer with glowing cheeks, whose good looks were greatly enhanced by his immaculate riding costume.

"This is the season for big sheep markets," we heard him say, "and to-day there are a great many here, but Boston once had a great market at which thirty-two thousand sheep were sold."

The Invalid was duly impressed. She tried other questions in her most fascinating manner, but ended by joining us, with the remark: "Pity he knows nothing but sheep!"

The Red Lion Inn, which faces the Narrow Bargate, has a more venerable exterior than the Peacock, but a decidedly decayed interior. It owns to the age of four hundred years, so

BOSTON MARKET-PLACE. — SHEEP MARKET IN THE WIDE BAR GATE

no wonder that it is neither very clean nor very modern at the present time. It was formerly the property of one of the Boston guilds, and in the inn yard strolling players were wont to perform for the delight of all Boston. At the other end of the market-place, past our lodging at the Peacock, is the South End, a very familiar term to the American Bostonian. The way there leads past Shod Friars Hall, an antique, picturesque-appearing building. It seems almost cruel to be forced to say it is but a restoration. Old Boston, which was founded by hermits, was a famous place for friars. They were the revivalists of olden times, and one family, the Tilneys, were so influenced that they founded no fewer than three friaries in Boston, while a fourth, the Carmelites, was endowed by a knight named De Orreby. For a small city, Boston was in olden times unusually well provided with religion. Even the celebrated guilds of Boston were semi-religious; nevertheless Boston, of all English cities, showed early the strongest Puritan spirit and the most decided sympathy with every action of the Reformed Parliament in England.

On the way to South End there still stand many old warehouses, and one of the largest,

Mustard, Harrow & Company, manufacture mushroom ketchup. Numerous houses of the Georgian period, with broad gardens in front of them, proclaim this end of the town — unlike its namesake in the U. S. A. — a dwelling-place of the rich. Behind one fine old mansion is the Grammar School, built in Tudor times. Boston, England, is as proud of the scholars turned out by this famous school as the Boston over the water ever has been of the glories of Harvard. Once the home of those foreigners whose honesty gave the word "sterling" to the English language, and a city so prosperous that, when King John levied a tax on all merchants within the kingdom, Boston paid the next largest sum to London, this city of the Fens has suffered from the decay of its trade for several centuries. Its citizens and corporation hope for great things in the future, with the completion of a fine dock recently built and capable of receiving large ships.

There is almost no gentry living near Boston, and no great estates in the neighbourhood. The Fen Country was a desirable property with which the Crown dared reward the nobles in the olden times. Now it is all so highly cultivated that there are no covers for

THE RIVER WYTHAM AND ST. BOTOLPH'S CHURCH. — OLD BOSTON WAREHOUSES. — THE MAUD FOSTER DRAIN

game. "No hunting, consequently no high society," said Polly, regretfully.

Old Boston town, which went to sleep after the excitement furnished by the departure of their vicar, John Cotton, and his followers, is now just beginning to wake up again. There is still a very stern, solemn, Puritanical look about the dull little Holland-like city, in spite of the numerous houses of entertainment. Some of these rejoice in extraordinary names. There is "The Axe and Cleaver," "The Loggerhead," "The Indian Queen," "The Ram," "The Whale," "The Unicorn," "The Red Cow," "The Blue Lion," and "The Black Bull." They all furnish abundant liquid refreshment, with our favourite "The Rum Puncheon," and the picturesque "Angel." Even the streets have delicious names: "Paradise Lane," and "Pinfold Alley," "Liquor Pond Street" and "Silver Street," "The Worm Gate," "The Bar Gate," Wide, and Narrow, and "Robin Hood's Walk." There is "Pump Square;" there is "Fish Loft Road," and in quaint "Spain Lane," in a house since demolished, until she was fourteen years old, lived Jean Ingelow, the writer. Boston is proud of its literary celebrities, and has erected a statue to Herbert

Ingram, the founder of the *London Illustrated News.*

When we left Boston it was again the late afternoon. The sky was flooded with brilliant orange, and light clouds tinged with rose colour floated over the glowing surface. The sails of the many windmills each showed colour or hue. They varied from violet to bright orange. As we looked out of the window on one side of the carriage the drains ran gold, while from the other side the colours of the fields were doubly strong. Every leaf stood out, vivid and distinct, on the fruit-trees, shaken and bent by the wind. The water of the Big Drain ran dark, making the whiteness of the many ducks, which were taking their evening swim, almost dazzling, and one dark gray windmill on a high dike, with its sails pure white and a roof richly red, looked like a painted toy. Not an inch of land in the Fen Country is wasted. The well-tilled fields are divided by the drains or thick thorn hedges; prosperous-looking haystacks are piled all over them, promising good feed to the herds of cattle now eating the rich green grass, and out of the rosy mist rises in the distance at intervals the steeple of a village church, with a cluster of roofs about it. As soon as we

came upon an irregular gray stone farmhouse, with dormer windows and picturesque thatched roof, we knew that we had left Lincolnshire behind and were nearing Peterboro, where we changed for Norwich.

# CHAPTER IX

## THE MAID'S HEAD

### Norwich

THE first view of Norwich was slightly disappointing. The twilight was fading rapidly, and in the half-light the drive in the 'bus to the Maid's Head took us through streets which looked like any other street in any other city. An electric car which passed us made the resemblance to more commonplace localities even stronger.

The Maid's Head, one of the most noted inns in England, now dignified (or disgraced) by the name of *Hotel,* is a judicious mixture of ancient and modern. After a career which associated its name with some of the most interesting and entertaining events in the history

THE MAID'S HEAD, NORWICH

of Norwich, it was about to pass into the hands of a brewing company, when it was rescued and put into its present shape by Mr. Walter Rye, a distinguished antiquarian, who has the interests of his native city of Norwich very near to his heart. The fine Tudor office, the bar, and the carved wainscoted smoke-room have been saved from the vandals and beer-drinkers. The ancient gables look down through the glass of the roofed-in courtyard, and Queen Elizabeth's room, with its narrow private stairway, remains in all its pristine glory.

Queen Elizabeth, as great a lover of change as Emperor William, if tradition speaks truly, made Norfolk several visits during her many progresses. In Norfolk her mother's early youth was passed.

The Maid's Head is full of treasures. The corridor is hung with charming old prints, and with drawings of ancient Norwich monuments now destroyed. The bedrooms, in spite of their modern furniture and electric lights, still show heavy oak beams across the ceilings, and the inside walls take quaint forms from the outside gables. The great assembly-room, at present given over to French cooking and a *table d'hôte,* has witnessed the efforts

of strolling players and the concerts of court musicians.

It was in this hall, where we hungry travellers gathered about a daintily lighted little table to eat with the vigour of Goths, that the good people of Norwich held a meeting in 1778, to decide whether they should or should not collect money to help conquer "the American rebels." The Norfolk men, it seems, had, however, so many relatives and friends among these same rebels, and so little love for King George, that they decided to refuse the government pecuniary assistance.

Great feastings went on within these four walls early in the history of Norwich. In the Paston letters — and every one who goes to Norfolk must read the Paston letters — "Ye Mayde's Hede" figures several times. All the great Norfolk families patronized this hostelry on their journeys to and from the court in London. The paved courtyard walls have echoed to the wheels of the lumbering coaches and the hoof-beats of the stout travelling horses of the Howards, the Oxfords, the Walpoles, and the Bullens, as they drove in for a halt, a change, or a night in Norwich before proceeding farther. The heavy oaken iron-barred doors, still to be seen

at the entrance, were hung here earlier in the inn's history; indeed they were on duty fully a century before Sir John Paston's time. In the thirteenth or early fourteenth century a robbery of some pilgrims took place in a chamber of the Mayde's Hede. The unjust accusation that the victims directed against an innocent girl in their party brought the landlord before the courts of English justice, and the innkeeper put up these heavy doors to prevent thieves from entering in future.

The Maid's Head is a house of entertainment so full of interest that we each spent a profitable evening reading the artistic little pamphlet containing its history, and presented us by the thoughtful management, along with our rooms.

Norwich does not get the attention it deserves from the tourist. We discovered, the morning following our arrival, that, in spite of the uninteresting streets on which we had passed judgment the evening before, this city possessed great charm for the antiquarian. It is as full of ancient flint churches as if they had been sprinkled out of a pepper-pot. Many of them are falling rapidly into a state of utter dilapidation, while others have been well restored.

The narrow lanes teem with houses of the most curious sort, with gables of quaint shapes and heavy overhanging façades, which cluster about the melancholy old churches; and it is to be feared they will soon all disappear, together with the old lanes and alleys, which are too narrow to admit of thoroughfare or other than foot-passengers.

Norwich, too, has a town-crier, but he is altogether a much more magnificent personage than his Boston confrère. He is a pompous little man, with a voice and a bell quite out of proportion to his stature. He hurries from corner to corner with an air of great mystery and importance, halting only to swing his loud bell and announce that some noted man has died, or that a church concert will be given. Dressed in a long blue coat much embellished with red and gold, a broad gold band around his hat, and gold stripes down the sides of his trousers, Norwich has cause to be proud of its town-crier.

Norwich has only within the last year or so been put upon the itinerary of the well-known tourist agencies. Not only for its noted cathedral, still enclosed by the great wall surrounding it in monkish times, but for the mixture of old and new is this city original

and charming. Its position in the centre of a most interesting county lends additional motives for attraction of visitors.

The cathedral is within a stone's throw of the Maid's Head. Its beautiful cloisters and splendidly carved gateways do honour to architects long forgotten, while its tall spire towers loftily above the many churches in its neighbourhood. Near to the cathedral, upon Tombland Square, stand many noble and ancient houses. The most interesting of these is now become an antiquity shop, and is called the House of the Giants, from two great figures which support the coping over the entrance porch.

This square of Tombland was the scene of a horrible explosion in olden times, when an enterprising mayor sought to celebrate his election in a novel way. Fireworks were then little understood, and, while endeavouring to entertain his fellow citizens by a display of rockets, the unfortunate city officer succeeded in killing several hundred of the spectators.

George Borrow's description of Norwich is as graphic to-day as when the author of "Lavengro," a native of Norfolk, first wrote it: "A fine old city," he calls it, "view it from whatever side you will . . . its thrice

twelve churches, its mighty mound, which, if tradition speaks true, was raised by human hands to serve as a grave heap for a heathen king." The mound is still topped by a castle, but one of modern date, while at the bottom, on Saturday, crowds gather to inspect the fine fat cattle raised on Norfolk's rich pasture-lands, and here offered for sale, and also to buy the handsome horses trotted about for inspection by the successors of George Borrow's gipsy friend, Mr. Pentelengro. Great stallions, with their tails and manes braided up in straw or ribbons, muscular ponies, and even showy carriage-horses are stabled here by the dealers under the castle wall. Opposite the horse and cattle markets, through a narrow street at the foot of the mound, runs the electric tram, at once the terror and the delight of the Norwich citizen. It is not a formidable danger, judged from the standpoint of a dweller in New York, and it winds through narrow and quaintly named streets, along Unthank Road, Rampant Horse Street, Grape Lane, The Gentleman's Walk, Timber Hill, and so on to Mousehold Heath, the city's park and pleasure-ground.

Past the antique Guild Hall, it is a long tram ride to the Dolphin Inn in the ancient

hamlet of Heigham, now a portion of Norwich. This inn was once the country house of Bishop Hall. It is an enchanting spot for afternoon tea. The river flows away at the bottom of its garden, a windmill is perched up on a low hill in the distance, and a charming view of Norwich forms a background.

The Invalid, who boasts a fine taste in ecclesiastical architecture, rather scorned the cathedral for the sake of St. Peter Mancroft, the great church on the market-place. We could hardly force her to leave the rosy-cheeked sexton, with whom she had lengthy gossips concerning St. Peter's history and rich relics, and she was amply rewarded by a sight of the fine communion plate, the monument to Sir Thomas Browne, and the leather money paid the bell-ringers long ago, and which they could only exchange for beer. We had no chance to test their powers, but the Invalid assured us, on the authority of the sexton, that, when the present generation of St. Peter's ringers get the bells in hand, the famous ringers of Christ Church, Oxford, hide their diminished heads with shame.

Polly's favourite haunt in Norwich was the book-shop of Mr. Agas Goose, in Rampant Horse Street. There she filled her mind with

proper information concerning the whole of Norfolk county, and the best way to see it in the short time we had to spend there. It was she who decided that we were to visit, of all its famous country-seats, Blickling Hall, which we surnamed "the beautiful."

"And when are you going to lead us there?" questioned the Matron, as we sipped coffee and nibbled toast and coquetted with pink petals of Wiltshire bacon, and discussed our plans.

"To-day at ten-twenty, if we go by train. It is an easy ride of ten miles by bicycle, if any one chooses that method of locomotion," was the prompt reply.

But the longer ride by rail tempted us in our indolence, and accordingly we "booked" for Aylsham, the railroad station nearest to Blickling. Aylsham revealed its incontestable charms as we walked up from its station, by a dear old manor-house, now vacant, and surrounded by a fine park gone nearly wild.

"How I should like to hire it and write a story about it," said the Invalid, who never wrote a line in her life, and whose ideas of the uncertain profits of literature are vague. This sad-looking brick manor-house, deserted since the last heir vanished from history, sits

in a tangle of wild roses and shrubbery, and would afford a perfect scene for a novel.

At the other end of the town, as soon as we could manage to get the Invalid and Polly past a cottage where they hung over the palings wrapt in admiration at the profusion, size, and colour of some wonderful begonias, we started out, along the smooth flint Norfolk road lined with fascinating country houses of ancient make, and between two rows of great elm-trees, to Anne Bullen's ancestral home.

Blickling Hall bursts a bit suddenly on the view. It looks more French than English, at the end of a grass and gravelled court, with low stables, as at Fontainebleau, stretching down on either side of the court to the gate. The entrance to the garden is through a colonnade, and the like of this garden grows nowhere save in England. It spreads its beauties on but one side of this fine old Tudor mansion. The beds, in which each flower which grows is doing its mightiest to make the sweetness of its scented pleasure felt, are divided by great, fine clipped walls of box. Nowhere is a richer or more democratic garden. There the nobles and commons, the great and the humble ones of the floral kingdom, who, regardless of season, blow and blos-

som with all their power. Beyond the great carpet of flowers stretches for acres a wide demesne of dense groves and long, shady paths, in which Anne Bullen is said to wander and to wail by night for her lost home and happiness.

Within the Hall, on the great staircase which divides at the landing, are two portraits carved in wood. In one of them, Anne Bullen stands here revealed in all the sprightly charm which captivated Henry's fickle heart, in spite of her somewhat plain face. She displays a style, a dash, an entrancing coquetry, which, from the other pictures we had seen of this unhappy woman, we had never suspected. In the opposite carving, her daughter, Queen Elizabeth, stands stiff in a bedizened costume, lacking all the grace of her mother. About this attractive, homelike mansion everywhere the black bull of the Bullen family crest is to be seen, either carved in wood or inlaid in marble. The restorations and the splendid new library on the garden side are models of the perfect taste of their modern designers.

At the gate of Blickling Hall is a little inn called the Buckinghamshire Arms. It is one of those inns which have been lately established in England to discourage the sale of

BLICKLING HALL GARDEN

alcoholic drinks by making it more profitable to the innkeeper to sell milder beverages. The Buckinghamshire Arms is said to be a very successful experiment. It is neat, clean, a relic in architecture of Tudor days, dressed up a little to suit modern times, and there we had a most excellent luncheon for the price of one shilling each.

The church at Blickling has a fine marble monument to the memory of the late Marquis of Lothian. Here also are many relics of the very early days when the church was put up or the foundations put down. The dates being somewhat effaced, the sexton makes them as remote as he chooses.

After viewing house and park, we still had two good hours before train-time, so we strolled along slowly back to Aylsham. Before us strode three farm labourers, going home after hoeing in a field, — a father and his two sons, or it might possibly have been a grandfather, father, and son.

"Behold the true kernel of the British nut!" exclaimed the admiring Matron, as the three men, straight of limb, flat of back, and broad of shoulder, started off so briskly that it was impossible to believe they had been bent up nearly double all day. The boy, whose age

was perhaps fourteen, stopped at a gate to shoulder a heavy bag of potatoes. After he raised the sack over his shoulder, he stood perfectly erect, in spite of the heavy weight, and, puckering up his lips, began to whistle what he imagined to be a tune; then started off at a pace which soon left us far behind.

In Aylsham there is a great old church of John of Gaunt's time, with a venerable lich-gate at the entrance to the churchyard. The interior, however, has been too much restored, as is often the case in Norfolk, and it is spoiled by being crowded with pews.

After the day of delights at Blickling, we took train the following morning in Norwich, and rattled away, through corn and turnip-fields, past red farms and square gray church towers, a brief twenty miles, to Yarmouth on the North Sea shore. The waves of this sea play wild games, they told us, with parts of the Norfolk coast. At some points it has wiped out whole villages, at another it has dashed up great sand-dunes and buried church and tower and surrounding houses out of sight.

Old Yarmouth, cockney resort though it be, is more interesting to the lover of the quaint and curious than any of the other more

fashionable and less historic places on the Norfolk coast. It has, to be sure, a Parade for the pleasure of the tripper, and long streets of commonplace houses like those of every English seaside town. Down behind all this modern sea-wall, however, in the ancient town where the Peggottys wandered, are the curious Yarmouth Rows. These are narrow passages between the high houses, where neighbours can shake hands across the opening from the windows of their homes. Unlike similar passages in old Continental towns, the Yarmouth Rows are clean and fresh.

We ate our dinner at "The Star," looking out at the many gaudy boats tied up by the side of the solid stone quay along the river. Black sails from the Broads, and red sails from the south coast were drying out side by side, while the sharp-arched bridge, like a Chinese print, led our eyes over to the weather-worn warehouses on the other side. Our hot luncheon, price, "two and six," was just like any other hot luncheon. It consisted of the usual joint, potatoes and cabbage, and a tart. With eyes closed, we could imagine eating it in any part of England through which we had passed, but, looking over the well-known menu, we forgot its monotony

because of the noble room in which it was served. "The Star" was once the home of one of those judges who condemned Charles, the king, to death. This room, with its superbly carved black oak walls, its lovely plaster ceiling and quaint blue-tiled fireplace, remains as it was in the seventeenth century, and it is the pride of the present host and owner of the hotel. Once upon a time a wealthy American offered the generous sum of six thousand pounds for its panelled walls, ceiling, and fireplace. He wished to transport them across the ocean to his fine new house in the States; but the owner of "The Star" proved to be a man of sentiment and artistic appreciation. He disdained the offer, and we rejoiced in his admirable decision.

It was on one of our many journeys by rail through Norfolk that we had caught sight of ruined towers and arches amid the foliage, and discovered our American weakness for antiquarian research and the study of church architecture. Therefore, as we rattled away in the train from Yarmouth, again bound for our headquarters in Norwich, we agreed upon a bicycle trip or two. Our conclusion was to follow the queer highways to the haunts of the ancient, the beautiful, and the grace-

fully dilapidated. Our consultation in the railway carriage resulted in an agreement to forswear a visit to modern and royal Sandringham, and give time and attention and admiration to Wymondham, where there is a ruined abbey, and to Thetford, an ancient Royal city.

Wymondham, by the way, is pronounced as if it were spelled Windham, for Norfolk is the prize county of all England for serious differences between the spelling and pronunciation of proper names. In preparation for this bicycle excursion, Polly and I bestirred ourselves early, and got four wheels down to the ten o'clock train going south. We had bought tickets both for machines and for the people who were to ride them, before the Matron and the Invalid came to the platform gate. The bicycle tickets cost three pence each; without tickets the wheels are not allowed on the train.

They have a way in rural England of keeping the railway from spoiling all pretty villages by its bustle and smoke, and this precaution involves a station sometimes a very long way from the attractive parts of the little towns. Neither the Invalid nor the Matron got a chance to fuss nor to make themselves

miserable about the bicycles. We said not a word to them about our arrangements, but let them enjoy the Norfolk scenery without anxious anticipations. The substantial walls of Coleman's Mustard Factory, just outside Norwich, the plumy trees of Hetherset, the ancient granges by the roadside, and the numerous flint churches so aroused their enthusiasm and engaged their whole attention that, when we presented them at Wymondham station with bicycles to ride to the then invisible town, never a question nor an objection did either of them offer. Their interest and admiration were wholly absorbed by the long lines of glittering flint walls, beautifully put together, and surrounding ancient flint churches, with thatched roofs, built to last to eternity of that proverbially hard substance. The flints, cracked in half for building, shine in the sun as though artificially polished, and, at nearer range, show blue, white, pink, and black, their irregular surfaces shining like jewels.

"I believe the monks have only gone off for a pilgrimage, and will be back to-morrow," was the Matron's first comment, as we rode down the street of Wymondham in the shadow of overhanging gables.

"We shall probably find a fat old cellarer in here," said Polly, when we entered at the sign of "The Green Dragon" to order lunch. Never did there exist a more perfect little hostelry than this. It has lingered on to hale old age from some time in the thirteenth century, when the abbey was in its glory. Then this jewel of an inn was used as a shelter for lay guests. It is a cosy place, but now too small to afford sleeping-room for any but the innkeeper and his family.

Under the carved beam which supports the overhanging casements we found an opening to a narrow passage warped by age or the inaccuracy of the monkish architect. Before this entrance hangs a nail-studded door strong enough for a fortress. Through a stuccoed corridor, one way led to the present tap-room. Before the rest of us had finished admiring the exterior, the Invalid was deep in conversation with the rosy-cheeked, buxom landlady, who sat behind a tiny bar. This bar in monkish times was a cupboard. Sticklers for preservation of antiques as we are, we did not think is a very aggressive innovation to make a bar of this little bowed window in the corner, where all the bright mugs and polished glasses hung as a background to the most

respectable of barmaids. The heavy oak beams of the ceiling in the quaint hall, black with age, are upheld with rudely carved figures of the knights who may have feasted here. The marks of the sculptor's tools are upon them and on the carvings which adorn the great fireplace.

"Don't turn the knob, Polly, or a monk will pop out of that low cellar door," I advised cautiously, as that inquisitive maiden embarked on one of her voyages of discovery around the rooms.

"Tumble out, you mean. I know there is one in there, all vine grown, who has been sipping for centuries at the noble wine laid down for guests three hundred years ago," she retorted, falling in with our mood.

"He can't get out," advised the Matron. "Don't you see the huge bunch of keys hanging on the antlers above the door? A prima donna will perhaps trip down those stairs in the corner if we stop here long enough," she continued, seriously. "Did you ever lunch in a stage inn before, all set for the first act?"

"I want but one pull at one of those leather tankards," said Polly, longingly, "and then I shall be able to tell you more about Wymondham Abbey than any guide-book."

"Yes, ladies, you can have tea and bread and butter, and eggs any way you choose, ready in half an hour," was the landlady's practical contribution to the conversation, as, bustling in, she unconsciously sent our imaginations back to the wants of the present time.

We stacked our bicycles before the inn's door, for the churchyard where, among the old cedars, stand the picturesque remains of the great abbey, is near.

Wymondham Priory was founded in 1107. It was a very rich institution, with all sorts of privileges, which made the monks very independent of the higher church authorities. They owned fields and meadows and all the lands about, and even changed the king's highway to suit themselves. A quarrel between the prior and a jealous superior, the Abbot of St. Albans, caused the Pope to turn the priory into an abbey for the Benedictines in 1448, and such it remained until the time of the dissolution. Another difference, with the Archdeacon of Norfolk, took the parish church from the jurisdiction of the abbey, and it was then that the queer things happened which gave the parish church its present unusual architectural peculiarities. The Pope decided that the abbot had no jurisdic-

tion over the parishioners; the monks at once made a division in the church, and built another tower, in which to hang the bell which called them to matins and primes. The parish church with the parish bell-tower is preserved as in ancient times, but the monks' beautiful tower, built in 1260, is a ruin draped from top to bottom with green vines. The parish church has a superb wooden ceiling in the nave, the spandrels springing from the backs of winged angels resting on grotesque heads.

It is easy to trace the former entrances to the cloisters, the chapter-house, and the various portions of the abbey by the closed doorways still visible. Extending over the churchyard from this fine shattered tower are groups of clustered columns and picturesque arches, — all that now remains of the abbey's old glory.

"I am quite satisfied that I have seen the finest old church in Norfolk," declared the Invalid, our chief amateur student of antique places of worship. "There may be others, but, as we have not months to spare here, I am glad to take home a remembrance of the noble beauty of these dignified aisles."

An ancient font, mutilated but still beauti-

ful, the pulpit, the chapels, and the base of the font were being that day decorated with fruits, vegetables, and flowers for the Harvest Festival.

The many venerable cedars in the churchyard suit the old place admirably, and so do the solemn, sleepy dwellings about the close. The old Green Dragon stood genial and smiling. It will take more storms than the little inn has yet weathered to wear off the jolly remembrance of its youth.

Whether it was that the landlady heard Polly's shivering at ghostly monks, or simply because she wanted us to enjoy freedom from intrusion, but she served our simple lunch in a little sitting-room, one side all lattice window, and with a ceiling so low that the shortest member of the party could touch it with an extra stretch of the arm. Great poppies on the paper and a wide fireplace caused the Matron to nod approval, as she devoured several extra slices of delicious cake.

The landlady, probably in gratitude for being answered all sorts of ingeniously conceived questions about America, recommended us earnestly to ride out to Stanfield Hall. It is not more than two miles from town. An atrocious murder having been committed there in 1848,

and Wymondham folk have not yet recovered from what to them is but a recent excitement. The present house is an Elizabethan moated grange surrounded by an unkempt park full of oak-trees; the atmosphere of the place is unaccountably sad and gloomy, but the melancholy is perhaps not so much due to the tragic death of the later master who was shot here by his tenant and bailiff, as to the memories of Amy Robsart, who wandered under the shade of the ancient trees with Leicester in the short bright days when he wooed her. This old estate was her father's home. Leicester, then Lord Robert Dudley, came wounded to old Stanfield Hall when his duty brought him to Norfolk with the troops at the time of the Ket rebellion, and Amy nursed him and loved him. The road to Stanfield, one of those perfect Norfolk highways which puts all other roads to shame, leads along with only one turn between the town and the Hall, passing fascinating old farmhouses, none younger than the age of Queen Elizabeth, with their front gardens decorated with quaint sun-dials, stilted rows of box, and fancifully trimmed bay-trees.

"We are the perfect time-keepers," said Polly, as we rode up to the station just one

minute before the Thetford train was due. When we got to Thetford, we very nearly wished we had stayed in curious old Wymondham.

"This may be an ancient royal city," said the Matron, "but it looks more early Victorian."

"But here is one of Mr. Pickwick's inns to console us," said the Invalid, as we rode into the court of "The Bell," a marked contrast to the thirteenth-century style of the Green Dragon.

"Those deceptive guide-books!" indignantly exclaimed the Matron, without noticing the interruption. "I supposed these streets would be full of queer old things, and all I see is a Jane Austen house or two."

We did not ask what a Jane Austen house was, but we did try to get some information from the green-aproned Boots at the Bell concerning the King's House, certain assurance of its existence having been dug by me out of our Norfolk Guide.

"I never heard of no King's House. Did you mean the house of Mr. King?" was his lucid reply.

The guide-book had told us that immediately upon entering Thetford we should be-

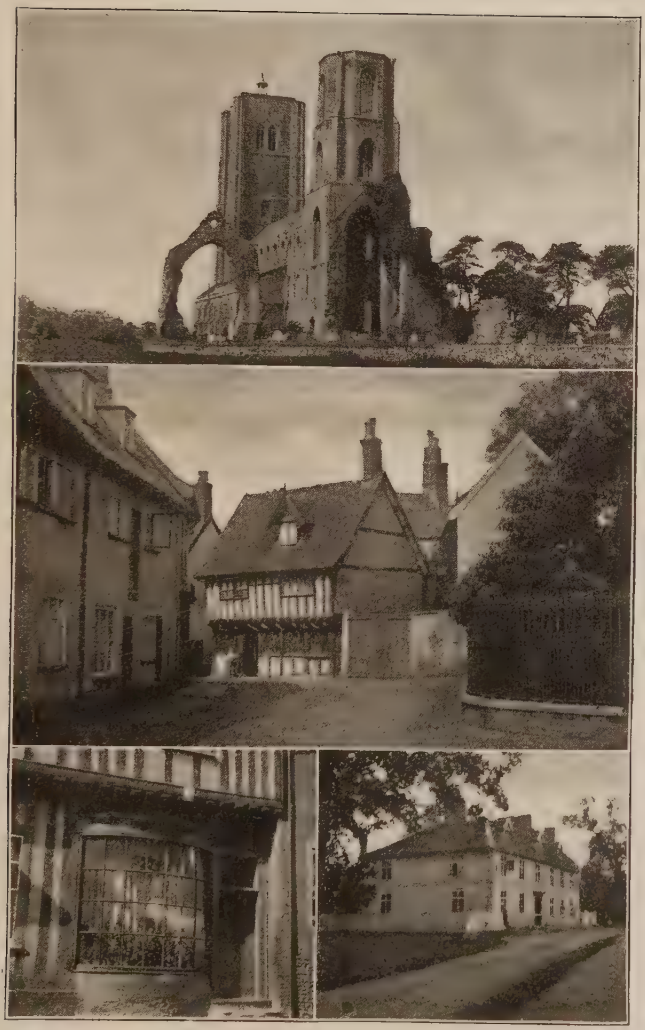
come conscious of its antiquity. We stared about in indignant disgust.

"That writer could not have known Wymondham," said Polly. "I only see Georgian houses, but perhaps we are not experts."

At last we found the so-called King's House, a former country residence of English kings, now a plain square brick mansion set in a garden and showing a small royal emblem stuck up above the flat cornice.

"This is all the king left there," said Polly, as she pointed her camera in the air. Thetford, we discovered for ourselves, possesses an artificial mound as large as the castle foundations at Norwich. There we also found a fine Elizabethan house down near the millstream, and outside the town lies a huge rabbit-warren extending for miles. It seemed to go on for ever over hill and hollow, and the little cottontails were skipping around, or sunning themselves outside their front doors, in the tamest sort of way, not at all like their wild Dartmoor kindred. Their silver-tipped tails amid the bracken made the whole great undulating plain flash and sparkle.

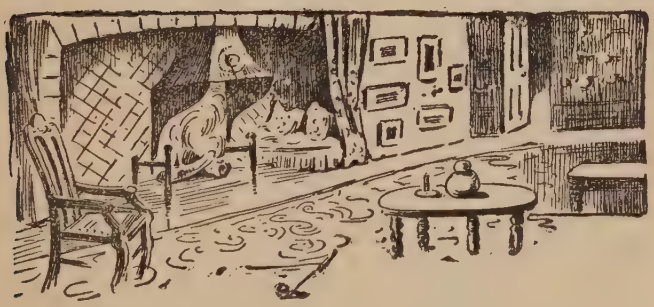
The Bell Inn is the most ancient and admirable structure remaining in Thetford, but all the quaintness is on the outside. The in-



THE RUINS OF WYMONDHAM PRIORY. — THE GREEN DRAGON INN, WYMONDHAM. — A THETFORD WINDOW. — THE INN AT BLICKLING

side has followed the prevailing Thetford fashion and become Georgian. The tea we found was of the extreme modern sort, — very dear and no flavour.

"After all, it was a delightful day," said the Invalid, as we said farewell to the last of the Thetford antiquities, the abbey gateway near the station, which is really more royal than the King's House. It led formerly to Thetford Abbey, the ancient burial-place of the Dukes of Norfolk.



# CHAPTER X

ANGEL INN

Acle Bridge

"WITHOUT a sail on the Broads, I refuse to leave Norfolk," declared the Matron, as we sat at dinner the night of our return from Thetford. "It would be rather hard to answer the questions our numerous friends will ask when they hear we have been in Norfolk."

"I know lots of people at home who think there is nothing to see in Norfolk but Sandringham and the Broads," continued the Invalid.

"And are not quite sure about Sandringham, either," finished Polly. "I don't see how we are going to manage it," said Polly.

ON THE NORFOLK BROADS

"Go ask the hotel manager, that is the wisest way, and we will decide ourselves when we hear what he tells you."

So Polly left us to go into the pretty Jacobean office, which looks for all the world like a monstrous piece of oak furniture, and we went on to warm ourselves before the great thirteenth-century fireplace in the reading-room. What a comfortable, great room it was! with writing-tables and tables covered with current literature. Our good luck inspired a gentleman sitting next us to talk to his wife of a cruise they were preparing to take on the Broads. He had been that day to engage a large wherry at Thorpe just beyond the railroad station, and the couple were preparing to live on the boat for two weeks. From his conversation we inferred that he had evidently rented a large boat capable of accommodating five or six people, for which he was to pay a pound a day. A man and a lad constituted the crew. How we wished we could exchange our coming ocean voyage and the big rocking steamer for such a quiet cruise and such a roomy wherry! The gentleman went off to complete his plans. He was not well out of the room, however, before the Invalid was deep in conversation with his

lady, and asking questions in her most enchanting manner. Who would not tell the Invalid all she wants to know when she cocks her pretty head on one side and looks so deeply interested? She entices knowledge from every one she meets.

Polly returned while the Invalid was imbibing knowledge, and our scheme for the morrow was satisfactorily arranged before the questioner rejoined us, bursting with information.

"They will take only a few tinned delicacies," she began, but never finished; we were too full of our own projects to listen to what others intended doing.

"We are in great luck," began Polly. "The manager referred me to the lady-manager, who, when she heard what we wanted, at once said that there happened to be two young men stopping in the hotel who had a large wherry at Wroxham Bridge which they wanted sailed down to Yarmouth. She had heard them talking about it to-day. They would let us hire it, she was sure, because they did not wish to rejoin the boat until sometime at the end of the week. If the wind is right, she says we can make the necessary twenty-six miles in a day. Even if there is

not a spanking breeze, it will be possible to see one or two of the Broads, and come back by rail from Salhouse or Acle. The manageress then went off to fetch one of the young men, and came back instead with their decision. We can have the boat to-morrow morning if we are each willing to pay them three dollars apiece for the day's pleasure; that sum will include luncheon, which we can take from here."

"Oh, why not stop at a riverside inn," exclaimed the Matron.

"We won't have much time for stopping unless the wind blows a gale or doesn't blow at all," answered Polly.

So we decided to take the wherry and see what we could.

We woke early on the eventful day to find the weather all we desired. Our plan of action included a very early breakfast and an early train to Wroxham Bridge, where we were to join "our ship," as Polly insisted upon calling it.

"Come early and avoid confusion," was the somewhat banal quotation the Invalid made when we stepped into the railroad carriage. For the first time in our travelling experi-

ence, Thorpe station did not resemble a hive of crazed bees. The English are not commonly stirring very early in the morning, and there were but a few passengers in the train besides ourselves. Wroxham Bridge lies eight miles from Norwich, and we were soon on board the wherry, which we found waiting at the landing. "There was a good breeze!" the skipper informed us. "If it kept up, we would be able to make our voyage to Yarmouth."

As the skipper proceeded to haul up the sail, the Matron exclaimed with delight: "It is black!"

"And we have a pink and purple boat," chimed in Polly.

"Only green and red," contradicted the Invalid.

At Wroxham Bridge countless boats of all sizes are gathered together. This is the halting-place for most of those who sail the Broads. We had twenty-six miles before us, — the distance by water to Yarmouth, — and we flew along with our black sail reefed. We skimmed between the flower-decked banks of the narrow stream into a spacious sheet of green rippling water, called Wroxham Broad.

ON THE BROADS, NEAR ACLE. — A VIEW NEAR NORWICH

Polly asked the skipper why these little lakes are called Broads.

"Because the stream is broad here," was the lucid answer.

Wroxham stretched out before us like a long lake. The reeds grew thick on the shore, and beyond them were clumps of low trees and broad meadows of soft-coloured grass, green fruitful park-lands, and glimpses of cattle in the shade. From Wroxham Broad our boat wound down a small stream, past a quaint village built along the water's edge on low swampy ground, showing colours of purple, green, yellow, and red in the meadow-grass. Away we went past a delightful, quaint inn at Horning Ferry. Here the Matron clamoured to stop and eat lunch under the sturdy willow-trees, but time was precious and the wind in our favour, and the skipper would not allow us to stop at Ranworth if we lingered at Horning Ferry. The Invalid had registered a vow to see in that hamlet an old church which boasts a celebrated rood screen. We therefore sailed along, discussing willows and luncheon at the same time, and we were in Ranworth Broad, flying before the wind, before we had ceased regretting the Horning inn. The hills suddenly rose on one side of

the water. Thick trees crowned their sides, but we got peeps at neat cottages and a church or two. Before we entered Ranworth Broad, the skipper told us of a model village, Woodbastwick, where the cottages are said to be like rose bowers, the village green is an ideal spot, and the church is full of wonderful brasses.

"Why can't we see *everything?*" sighed the Invalid.

"It is sometimes more satisfactory to hear descriptions than to see places," replied the suspicious Polly.

We pushed in among the rushes about the landing-place, where lay bundles of reeds stacked up for the thatchers, and the only building visible was a hoary old cottage, deserted save by a cat and her kittens who were having great games together in the small window.

A tidy old inn, the Malster, was discovered at a turn in the road, and Polly and I went in to see if the landlady could furnish us with some cream for our tea, while the Matron and the Invalid took their way onward up a short hilly road to the church.

Ranworth is a hamlet. It has not even a "village store"; the cottages are tucked away in little crannies of the uneven ground; there

is no railway within several miles; a cheerful parsonage and a comfortable manor-house are the only dwellings except a few small cottages. When Polly and I left the Malster, and climbed the road to the church, we found the Matron embracing two very beautiful white Borzoi hounds, while a cheeky little black Scotch terrier looked on and barked in disgust. The Invalid was not visible, and, as soon as the Matron could get her head away from the dogs, she told us that the vicar had met them and he was now inside the church, showing the Invalid the noted painted screen she had so wished to see. The Matron frankly "preferred playing with his fine dogs to seeing *any* ancient screen, no matter *how* lovely."

"Remember we can only have ten minutes here," said methodical Polly, and we left our companion romping with the graceful hounds. My heart was divided between the screen and the dogs, so I took the screen first. Those who like antiquities are prepared to rave about everything, whether it be really worth their enthusiasm or not, but even the greatest of Philistines, and I am of their number, could see the beauty of this old church and its painted reredos. I rushed out as soon as I had looked at it, and forced the Matron to

come back with me, if only to admire for a moment the elaborate flower-work and the splendid colours in the dresses of the saints. There proved to be other interesting things in Ranworth Church. A fine old font and a curious lectern are, with its screen, among its prized possessions. Our skipper told us that it is the church best worth visiting on the Broads.

"I must return some day and see your dogs," cried the Matron, when she hears they have a kennel full of puppies.

"And I want really to live a summer in this country, through which we only have flown to-day," added the Invalid.

The wind still held good, so we sailed down the river past St. Benet's Abbey. A queer ruin this; it looks like a giant hop-kiln. The remains to be seen from the water of this once very rich and powerful monastery are meagre, though at nearer range some of its tall arched doorways appear, and the hues on the marshy meadows about the ruins make a poetic picture of the few stone walls still left standing.

We had not the time to enter South Walsham Broad, about which there is great excitement in the neighbourhood, for fear the squire

will fulfil his threat and close its waters to the public.

"South Walsham," said our skipper, "is a charming village, and the Broad small but lovely." We had no time to linger, but flew with well-filled sail past the windmill at its mouth, where another small river joins the Bure. Our course was straight away for Acle Bridge. The stream runs rapidly between banks, protected from the encroachment of the water by bulkheads. The meadows, on which great herds of cattle and horses were feeding, were bright with the scarlet flame of the poppies, and soon the three-arched Acle Bridge was before us, and many windmills twirled their white arms over the flat land. Down went our mast, as we slid under the middle arch of the bridge, and we tied up for tea at the Angel.

"The skipper says we need not hurry; we have but twelve miles still before us. With a good wind we should be in Yarmouth before eight, even if we while away an hour before leaving here. Let us order tea, and then go to the village," suggested our Matron.

Acle proved to be half a mile from the inn. The village consisted of a group of houses without visible gardens, built on three sides

of a village green minus any green thing, excepting one great tree. But we shall always have tender remembrance of it for the sake of the larks who sang us enchanting trills and roulades as we took our way back to the Angel. The sun was getting low, the evening light was golden, and the songsters were rising for their last flight, their voices loud and clear when their tiny forms had become mere specks in the glowing sky. As we started off again down the river, the air was full of their music. This part of the Bure is a land for painters; a great, flat sweep of country, with here and there a group of trees about a red farmhouse, or a beckoning windmill. The sails of many boats, black, white, or coloured by the weather, apparently skim over the distant meadow; now and again a little red-brick village nestles down near to the water's edge, and every high point of land is crowned by a noble square flint church tower. Even the moon was kind to us, and came up, peeping out among pink clouds, to make our way more beautiful.

"You should take a month to see the Broads and a year to see Norfolk," was the skipper's oft-repeated advice. We agreed humbly. We had passed villages we longed to explore, and Broads of which we could not even get a

AN INN DOORWAY. — ACLE BRIDGE. — IN ACLE VILLAGE. — A BOAT DYKE

glimpse. The flint churches, with their thatched roofs, all out of proportion to the size of the congregations who support them, are sprinkled thick over the landscape, and the skipper told the Invalid such tales of the treasures in brass and carving they contain that she heaved mighty sighs of longing. We made a record sail; we skimmed down Wroxham Broad and peeped into Ranworth, but we passed by five other little lakes. We heard tales of three others into which our large boat could not sail, but which are well worth visiting. A summer land flitted past our eyes, and we hated to leave it. Along the banks and in small boats out in the stream we saw patient anglers, and one queer little covered boat, moored in the reeds, was pointed out as the abode of a professional eel-catcher. It was a diminutive house-boat of exceedingly rude description. Polly and the Invalid plied the skipper with practical questions.

For a party of four or five, the expense of two weeks on the Broads would not exceed three dollars apiece per day, taken in the most extravagant fashion. For the artist there is sketching, for the sportsman fishing and sporting, and for every one a lazy, happy life surrounded by unwonted beauty of scene.

"To be sure, there be the Rogers sometimes," said the skipper, who is listening attentively to our ravings.

"The Rogers! Who are they?" asked Polly, looking around, as if she expected to see an army of tramps or worse bearing down upon us from the shore.

"The Rogers? Oh, they are a sort of squall," he explained, and Polly was so relieved that she forgot to ask why they bear that name, and left the skipper to continue his tales of the good skating and ice-boating to be had upon the Bure and the Broads in fine winter weather.

As we neared Yarmouth, the changing sky and the moonlight made lovely the banks which in brighter light might look dull and squalid, and, when the dark outlines of the town houses appeared on the horizon, we had a scene to thrown an artist into a state of ecstasy. From our boat at the stone quay, we had but a short walk, amid the old buildings, to the station, where a train returning to Norwich was just about to depart.

The day had been so crowded with experience that it seemed a week long.

"We at least know where to go when, next

year, we come back to Norfolk," philosophizes Polly.

"I shall sail the Broads," said the Invalid, gazing back at the great wherry with a sigh.

Early next morning we left our comfortable lodgings at the Maid's Head. Again we saw Wymondham and Thetford in the distance as the train flew past, and, with a glimpse of Ely and Cambridge on our way, we pulled up at last in London again at St. Pancras. We had left many things undone. We had not seen half Norfolk, but we had discovered that it is a county full of diversified charm, and with greater variety than any part of England into which our tour had led us. The Maid's Head was not cheap, perhaps, but it was good, for all the inns which glory in the modern title of hotel cost at the very least three or four dollars a day. Norfolk is rich in charming little wayside inns, picturesque and tidy, but, as we found elsewhere, they had no beds to offer the traveller; plenty to drink, but little to eat. The majority of the smaller and older inns have fallen into the hands of the brewers, alas! who care more for the sale of their beer than for the preservation of the picturesque and ancient hospitality.

Our tour was over with our farewell to

Norfolk and our sail on the Broads; and the whole party have fallen so deeply in love with the little country full of green fields and singing birds, bright flowers, pleasant hostelries, and civil, simple people, that they look forward with longing to future expeditions in other counties of Merrie England.

THE END.

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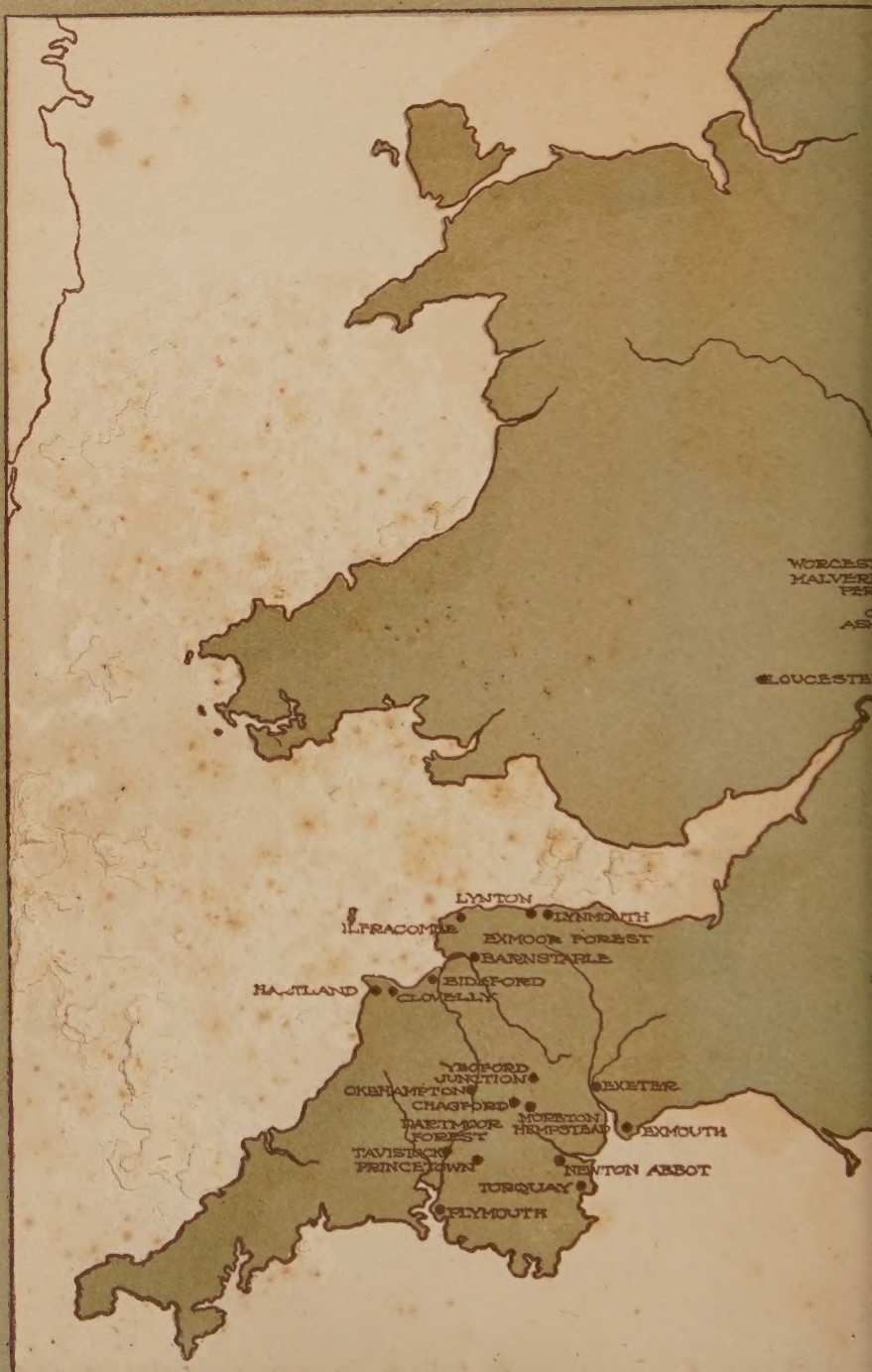
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